

POLITICAL AND AESTHETIC CONCERNS IN FRANZ
GRILLPARZER'S HISTORICAL DRAMAS: A STUDY OF
*KÖNIG OTTOKARS GLÜCK UND ENDE, EIN TREUER
DIENER SEINES HERRN AND EIN BRUDERZWIST IN
HABSBURG*

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ABSTRACT

The thesis explores political and aesthetic concerns in Grillparzer's historical dramas *König Ottokars Glück und Ende*, *Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn* and *Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg*.

The thesis argues that Grillparzer's political, philosophical and aesthetic views are linked.

Grillparzer was no reactionary, but rather a perceptive and critical observer of his age. He was far from an unconditional supporter of the repressive Habsburg government, but rather an advocate of the universal values of the multinational state. Grillparzer's central themes in these plays include leadership and power, the interplay of public and private spheres and ethical concerns of justice and morality. Grillparzer aimed through drama to observe, reflect on and appraise the social and political changes underway in the transitional and turbulent nineteenth century. Grillparzer's investigation into the psychological complexities of human nature is linked to broader philosophical and historical debates. In the form and content of the historical dramas, Grillparzer illustrates the unwieldiness and unpredictability of history as well as revealing his pessimistic view of human progress. Grillparzer presents irrational, disruptive elements as inherent in human nature and shows how they continually obstruct and inhibit human potential. Nevertheless, Grillparzer continues to propound humanitarian values.

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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are commonly used throughout the thesis in the body of the text. Where appropriate, volume numbers are indicated using roman numerals, followed by page numbers in Arabic numerals.

As the *DKV* edition of Grillparzer's works is incomplete, I have used the *DKV* volumes when citing from the dramas, the J. G. Hoof edition of Grillparzer's *Selbstbiographie* and the *GW* volumes when citing from all other sources, namely epigrams, poems, essays and diary entries.

Editions of Grillparzer's Works

GW *Grillparzers Werke in sechzehn Teilen*, ed. by Stefan Hock
(Berlin/Leipzig/Wien/Stuttgart: n. d.)

DKV Franz Grillparzer, *Werke in sechs Bänden*, ed. by Helmut Bachmeier (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1986-)

SB *Franz Grillparzer: Selbstbiographie: mit einem Anhang: Hugo von Hofmannsthal: Rede auf Grillparzer*, ed. by J. G. Hoof (Warendorf: J. G. Hoof, 2003)

Journals

GLL *German Life and Letters*

JbGG *Jahrbuch der Grillparzer-Gesellschaft*

JbDSG *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Schillergesellschaft*

INTRODUCTION

Will unsre Zeit mich bestreiten,
Ich laß es ruhig geschehen,
Ich komme aus andern Zeiten,
Und hoffe in andre zu gehn. (GW, II: 196)

Written in 1860, this epigram reveals Grillparzer's insight into his incongruent position, politically and aesthetically, within the nineteenth century. The ambiguous nature of Grillparzer's dramas continues to evoke debate between scholars and has inspired contrasting interpretations. Ian Roe and Bruce Thompson highlight the discrepancy between direct criticism of nineteenth-century politics in diary entries, poems, essays and epigrams, and more subtle criticism in the dramas.¹ Grillparzer was living in an era of transition. This upheaval is reflected in his dramas, which grapple with political concerns of the day as well as evoking aesthetic and ethical issues. Through drama, Grillparzer reflects and comments on the socio-political developments of his age, whilst also engaging with wider historical and philosophical debates.

This thesis is concerned with Grillparzer's approach to politics and aesthetics in his historical dramas *König Ottokars Glück und Ende* (1823/1825), *Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn* (1828) and *Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg* (1848/1872).² It argues that Grillparzer's private diaries and epigrams only tell a partial story about his political and literary engagement. The dramas are a richer source, providing a greater sense of the ambiguity of Grillparzer's engagement with history as well as his treatment of socio-political problems through history. The dramatist's association with Weimar Classicism, Viennese theatre and more modern

¹ Ian F. Roe, *An Introduction to the Major Works of Franz Grillparzer, 1791-1872, Austrian Dramatist* (New York: Mellen, 1991), pp. 243-247; and Bruce Thompson, 'Grillparzer, Revolution and 1848', in *Essays on Grillparzer*, ed. by Bruce Thompson and Mark G. Ward (Hull: Hull University, 1978), pp. 81-91.

² The first date is the date of completion; the second is the date of performance.

movements such as psychological realism need to be considered, as these influences feature prominently in the dramas. The thesis argues that questions of leadership, private and public spheres, power, morality and justice are key issues in Grillparzer's historical dramas. The analysis illustrates the multi-faceted ways in which he approached topics of central philosophical and political importance to Austria and Europe in the nineteenth century.

The introduction is divided into two sections: the first section explores nineteenth-century political developments; the second considers traditions of German drama. The space available does not permit a comprehensive overview of nineteenth-century Austrian history, but rather a selective outline of key social, political and aesthetic concerns that informed Grillparzer's practice as an historical dramatist. Grillparzer's reactions to political events from 1815-1848 will be addressed, along with his treatment of socio-political developments and discussion of different literary traditions in his autobiography, relevant diary entries, poems, essays and epigrams. This context shall form the basis of the discussion of Grillparzer's historical plays in the chapters that follow. Grillparzer's historical dramas were the result of a fusion of literary and theatrical influences with an acute awareness of cultural, social and political developments. At the heart of these works lie Grillparzer's opinions about his age.

1. Grillparzer and the Habsburg Empire 1815-1848

By the late eighteenth century, the Habsburg Monarchy faced opposition from within its territories and from external forces. The greatest threat came from revolutionary France. A modern nation-state based on popular sovereignty, this was not just a rival power but an ideological threat for the Monarchy, which was at the heart of a supra-national dynastic

enterprise.³ The Habsburg response was to abandon attempts to base its authority on supposed moves towards modernity and utility, and retreat to age-old claims of legitimacy. As the turbulent period 1815-1848 testifies – a time of endemic social conflict - this proved an inadequate basis on which to justify a multinational empire.⁴ After the upheaval and devastation of the Napoleonic wars, conservatism triumphed at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, hailing the start of the period often referred to as the ‘Restoration’ (1815-1830). The principal advocates of restorative policies were the Austrian Emperor Francis I and his chancellor Clemens Wenzel Count Metternich.⁵ Metternich achieved victory for his ‘balance of power’ idea, designed to thwart Europe-wide national movements by building alliances with like-minded states to exert authority through coordinated use of armies and police forces to intervene where necessary to crush dissent.⁶ ‘Restoration’ evokes the struggle to reverse the effects of the French Revolution and underlines the reactionary, backward-looking character of the age, yet ignores other key aspects, namely the heightened socio-political conflict emphasised by the term *Vormärz*, which suggests a prelude to the upheaval of 1848.⁷ No complete restoration of the old regime took place after 1815, no return to traditional structures that had protected Habsburg authority.⁸

The challenges the Habsburg government faced to preserve the multinational structures of the empire were multiple and widespread. Joseph II sowed the seeds of

³ Steven Beller, *A Concise History of Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 104.

⁴ Ibid; and David Thomson, *Europe since Napoleon* (Middlesex: Longmans, 1957), p. 129.

⁵ Francis II declared himself Francis I, first ‘hereditary emperor of Austria’ on 11 August 1804 in response to Napoleon Bonaparte’s declaration of himself as emperor of the French in May 1804: see Beller, *Austria*, p. 106.

⁶ Alan Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire 1815-1918*, 2nd edition (London: Longman, 2001), p. 9; and Paula Sutter Fichtner, *The Habsburg Empire: From Dynasticism to Multinationalism* (Malabar: Krieger, 1997), pp. 28-30.

⁷ Christopher Clark, ‘Germany 1815-1848: Restoration or pre-March?’, in *Nineteenth-Century Germany: Politics, Culture and Society 1790-1918*, ed. by John Breuilly (London: Edward Arnold, 2001), pp. 40-65 (pp. 40-41).

⁸ Ibid.; and Beller, *Austria*, p. 113.

modern political opposition to the Monarchy by dramatically accelerating the pace of dynastic centralization.⁹ Metternich did his utmost after 1815 to ensure Lombardy-Venetia and Hungary were governed as Austrian provinces. Important decisions were made in Vienna, local diets ignored and disunity between territories exploited: German regiments crushed dissent in Bohemia, whilst Hungarian troops patrolled Lombardy.¹⁰ Hungary posed the greatest challenge. Metternich's policies were based on absolute opposition to the Hungarian reform movement, which sought a liberal, semi-independent Hungary: the press was controlled, secret police employed, terror tactics employed and opponents of the Habsburg regime imprisoned.¹¹ The multinational empire proved remarkably resilient, but Metternich's self-asserted legitimacy did not: opposition to all social and political change may have delayed the empire's eventual collapse, but some historians argue that the refusal to embrace reform made collapse inevitable.¹²

Metternich's efforts at restoration shaped the period 1815-1848 politically and culturally. Bauer argues that writers are best grouped in terms of loyalty, disinterest or opposition to Metternich's policies.¹³ Opinions vary over whether these years represent a distinct epoch in literature. Some scholars identify the unity of the era in its disunity: authors disagreed over central matters of poetic language and its employment, characterisation,

⁹ Charles W. Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1618-1815*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 201-209.

¹⁰ Sked, *Decline and Fall*, pp. 31-32; and Thomson, *Europe*, pp. 130-131.

¹¹ Sked, *Decline and Fall*, pp. 34-36; and R. J. W. Evans, *Austria, Hungary, and the Habsburgs: Essays on Central Europe, c.1683-1867* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 189-192.

¹² Beller, *Austria*, pp. 104-124.

¹³ Winfried Bauer, 'Geistliche Restauration versus Junges Deutschland und Vormärz-Literaten', in *Deutsche Literatur: Eine Sozialgeschichte*, ed. by Horst Albert Glaser, vol. 6, *Vormärz: Biedermeier, Junges Deutschland, Demokraten: 1815-1848*, ed. by Bernd Witte (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1980), pp. 99-112 (p. 99).

idealisation and the role of literature in the changing socio-political environment.¹⁴ The term *Biedermeier* was associated with the simple lifestyle of a bourgeoisie that had retired into the private sphere; for some this was the only answer to the repression suffered by rebellious cultural elites before 1848.¹⁵ *Biedermeier* trends have been linked to political quietism, as literature became a refuge for a middle class alienated by stagnation and resigned to political irrelevance in a post-1815 state, which resisted calls for a constitution.¹⁶ Roe defines quietism as withdrawal from a hostile public sphere in favour of inner contemplation, peace and quiet.¹⁷ The early nineteenth-century political world was one of repression, particularly for the *Bildungsbürgertum*, who suffered under strict censorship laws, bans on freedom of speech and congregation.¹⁸ Wolfgang Menzel, editor of the *Literaturblatt* (1826-1848), responded by seeking a 'geistliche Restauration', a revival of pre-revolutionary values in art and literature, to mirror Metternich's political restoration.¹⁹ Yet Daviau stresses the misleading nature of *Biedermeier* as a definition for the epoch. He notes 'Biedermeier values' – withdrawal from political activity, contentment in private existence, and love of art, music and nature – were applicable only to a small, privileged segment of

¹⁴ Robert C. Holub, 'Literary Controversy: Naming and Framing the Post-Romantic, Pre-realist Period', in *German Literature of the Nineteenth Century: 1832-1899*, ed. by Eric Downing and Clayton Koelb (Columbia: Camden House, 2005), pp. 93-116 (pp. 111-112).

¹⁵ Karin Friedrich, 'Cultural and intellectual trends', in *Nineteenth-Century Germany: Politics, Culture and Society 1780-1918*, ed. by John Breuilly (London: Edward Arnold, 2001), pp. 96-117 (p. 108). The term 'Biedermeier' derived from the fictitious schoolteacher Gottlieb Biedermeier created by Ludwig Eichrodt and Adolf Kussmaul for publishing poetry in the Munich journal *Fliegende Blätter* (1854-1857). For more detail see Franklin L. Ford, *A General History of Europe: Europe 1780-1830* (London: Longman, 1970), pp. 380-381.

¹⁶ For more detail about writers and artists associated with the *Biedermeier* era see Friedrich, 'Cultural and Intellectual Trends', pp. 105-112.

¹⁷ Ian F. Roe, 'Grillparzer and the Language of Quietism', *GLL*, 44 (1991), 221-235 (p. 221).

¹⁸ Donald G. Daviau, 'Biedermeier: The Happy Face of the Vormärz Era', in *The Other Vienna: The Culture of Biedermeier Austria: Österreichisches Biedermeier in Literatur, Musik, Kunst und Kulturgeschichte*, ed. by Robert Pichl and Clifford A. Bernd (Vienna: Lehner, 2002), pp. 13-22.

¹⁹ Bauer, 'Geistliche Restauration', p. 100.

the population, who expressed little interest in engaging in socio-political affairs.²⁰

Boeschstein argues the Metternich era elicited quietist reactions from some, yet others protested against the situation and attempted to remedy it.²¹ To think of this period as one of restoration or *Biedermeier* marginalises key strands in literature, as even supposedly conservative writers like Grillparzer were engaging critically with problems faced by the Habsburg Empire.

Political and intellectual life quickened in 1830 in response to liberal monarchy in France, the emergence of an independent Belgium and uprisings in Poland and Italy.²² Metternich responded by imposing further repressive measures. In October 1830, laws were introduced permitting armed intervention in member states without prior permission from their governments, a power exercised in Luxembourg, Frankfurt and Baden. A new political intelligence-gathering institute was founded in 1833 following the failed attack on garrison-buildings in Frankfurt.²³ The very repression designed to combat forces of change stimulated political curiosity, making the period often referred to as the *Vormärz* (1830-48) a time of social politicization and polarization.²⁴ The *Jungdeutschen* expressed political views through poetry, plays and journalistic pieces. Georg Büchner provoked uproar and a police witch hunt with his pamphlet *Der Hessische Landbote* (1834). He encouraged revolts among the oppressed peasant population in Hesse-Darmstadt with the motto 'Friede den Hütten, Krieg

²⁰ Daviau, '*Biedermeier*', pp. 11-29.

²¹ Hermann Boeschstein, *German Literature of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Edwin Arnold, 1969); see John Pizer, 'Navigating the Nineteenth Century: A Critical Bibliography', in *German Literature of the Nineteenth Century: 1832-1899*, ed. by Eric Downing and Clayton Koelb (Columbia: Camden House, 2005), pp. 281-302 (p. 291).

²² William Carr, *A History of Germany: 1815-1945* (London: Edward Arnold, 1969), p. 23.

²³ Clark, 'Germany', pp. 44-46.

²⁴ Arne Koch, 'Revolution and Reaction: The Political Context of Central European Literature', in *German Literature of the Nineteenth Century: 1832-1899*, ed. by Eric Downing and Clayton Koelb (Columbia: Camden House, 2005), pp. 63-89 (p. 66).

den Palästen'.²⁵ Draconian censorship policies forced Heinrich Heine into exile in France from 1833. Torn between German patriotism and disgust at the failure of liberals to overcome repressive policies, he criticised the political backwardness of Germany through writing.²⁶ Daviau considers *Vormärz* a more comprehensive designation of the period, emphasising the strains imposed by the political system of a police state intent on absolute control over its citizens.²⁷ The following discussion examines how different political and cultural forces impacted on Grillparzer and his works in order to assess his place in the nineteenth century.

Evidence in diaries and epigrams testifies to Grillparzer's unease regarding socio-political developments underway in the nineteenth century. Ritchie Robertson relates Grillparzer's disquiet to his loyalty to the ideals of the Enlightenment, proclaimed in his poem 'Des Kaisers Bildsäule' (*GW*, I: 101-103), written in 1837 in praise of Joseph II.²⁸ Joseph's regime was one of enlightened despotism: his policies were both tolerant and repressive, sources of emancipation and domination. Liberals and absolutists alike looked to him for inspiration.²⁹ The son of Maria Theresa, he succeeded his father as Holy Roman Emperor in 1780. He was a firm believer in reason and knowledge and did not consider himself the head of a divinely sanctioned order, but rather the first servant of the state, the guardian of its laws and chief of its administration.³⁰ Rather than value religious and

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

²⁶ See Friedrich, 'Cultural and Intellectual Trends', pp. 106-107; and *Heinrich Heine Poems*, ed. by John H. Betts, introduction and notes by Ritchie Robertson (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1993), pp. 1-19.

²⁷ Daviau, '*Biedermeier*', pp. 12-13.

²⁸ Ritchie Robertson, 'The Failure of Enlightenment in Grillparzer's *Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg* and Goethe's *Die natürliche Tochter*', in *Für All, was Menschen je erfahren: Beiträge zu Franz Grillparzers Werk*, ed. by Joseph P. Strelka (Bern: Peter Lang, 1995), pp. 165-187 (p. 165).

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ James J. Sheehan, *German History 1770-1866* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 49.

ceremonial props, Joseph exercised real power and influence over his subjects by grounding Habsburg rule upon bureaucratic foundations and achieving machine-like uniformity within the Empire, centralizing and regularizing wherever possible.³¹ This is apparent in his introduction of German as the official language for the Habsburg realm in 1784, a step which implied the suppression of other languages and proved particularly unpopular in Hungary.³² Despite striving for unity, Joseph encouraged diversity in religious matters. He extended the secularisation process by dissolving monastic orders, effecting large-scale parish and diocesan reorganisation and taking over the education of the clergy. Toleration Patents imposed in 1781 and 1782 withdrew the Catholic church's power to impose teaching on unwilling subjects, improving the position of Protestants, the Greek Orthodox church and Jews. Maria Theresa had worked diligently to raise living standards among different social classes as she discerned a direct link with productivity and state revenue. Joseph continued to remove class and religious restrictions on education to provide opportunities for a larger proportion of society and aid the economic modernisation of the Habsburg dominions.³³

Grillparzer was inspired by Joseph II's strategy of cultivating diversity, whilst ensuring the preservation of the empire as a unified whole. He celebrated Joseph as a defender of the principles of the multinational state, of humanitarianism and order.³⁴ Grillparzer was also influenced by Enlightenment thinkers, particularly Lessing and Kant.³⁵ He believed in the power of reason and justice to arrive at truth and rejected what he regarded as the metaphysical speculations of Hegelians, shown in his epigram 'Hegel':

³¹ Ibid., pp. 50-54.

³² For more detail on resistance to Joseph II's policies see Evans, *Austria, Hungary, and the Habsburgs*, pp. 134-147; and Ingraio, *Habsburg Monarchy*, pp. 197-209.

³³ Ingraio, *Habsburg Monarchy*, pp. 188-191 and 198-202.

³⁴ Robertson, 'Failure of Enlightenment', p. 165.

³⁵ Ibid.

Möglich, daß du uns lehrst, prophetisch das göttliche Denken;
Aber das menschliche, Freund, richtest du wahrlich zu Grund. (GW, II: 242)

Kant's view of politics and history derived from ethical premises. In contrast, Hegel saw ethical judgements regarding politics as relative, determined by the given stage of dialectical progress toward fulfilment of the 'Idea'.³⁶ History for Hegel was the record of human thought, progressing towards greater rationality, which constitutes freedom of the will. The process he perceived was not one of direct advance, but rather a dialectical one of 'theses' generating 'antitheses', and of 'syntheses' produced by such conflicts becoming new theses.³⁷ Grillparzer dismissed Hegel's dialectic as over-simplifying the complex process of history. He saw history as unpredictable and concerned with much besides law or politics.³⁸

Grillparzer was alarmed by nineteenth-century socio-political developments, particularly growing nationalism and the increasingly repressive state. Grillparzer considered it essential to protect the supranational structures of the empire that served as a shield against nationalism, which, he believed, fostered excessive pride, expansionism and war.³⁹ Nationalism, to his mind, took shape in Germany and spread discontent to surrounding areas.⁴⁰ Grillparzer criticised Prussian architectural projects that aimed to promote the national cause: his poem 'Kölner Dombau' (1842) compared the cathedral to the

³⁶ Stephen Houlgate, *An Introduction to Hegel: Freedom, Truth and History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 36-43.

³⁷ For more detail see Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present* (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1968), pp. 39-43.

³⁸ For more detail on Hegel also see Joseph McCarney, *Hegel on History* (London: Routledge, 2000); and *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth-Century Philosophy*, ed. by Frederick C. Beiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

³⁹ Dagmar C. G. Lorenz, 'Grillparzer's Attitude toward the State, the Nation, and Nationalism', in *Aneignungen, Entfremdungen: The Austrian Playwright Franz Grillparzer (1791-1872)*, ed. by Marianne Henn, Clemens Ruthner, & Raleigh Whiting (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), pp. 1-20 (p. 12).

⁴⁰ Grillparzer believed Prussia under Bismarck had encouraged Italian national uprisings in 1859: 'Sieht Piemont in den Spiegel | Schaut Preußen heraus.' (GW, II: 326). For further details see Renate Langer, 'Grillparzer und die deutsche Reichsgründung', in *Literatur und Nation: die Gründung des Deutschen Reiches 1871 in der deutschsprachigen Literatur: mit einer Auswahlbibliographie*, ed. by Klaus Amann and Karl Wagner (Vienna: Böhlau, 1996), pp. 317-341 (p. 333).

‘Riesenturm zu Babel’ and recommended the building of ‘ein mittelhochdeutsch Narrenhaus | Für Bauverein und Gründer’ (GW, I: 107). He believed a powerful, ethnically diverse multinational state cultivated prosperity and cultural improvement.⁴¹ Nationalism was the chief evil of the age, the driving force of revolutionary activity that would cause the demise of the Habsburg Empire and the values it embodied. His view of nationalism was summed up in the famous epigram of 1849:

Der Weg der neuern Bildung geht
von Humanität,
durch Nationalität,
Zur Bestialität. (GW, II: 286)

Grillparzer was also concerned about the ruthlessly repressive state. The secret police, established under Count Anton Pergen, undertook surveillance of those within the Habsburg Empire, as well as citizens travelling abroad. Tensions peaked in March 1819 when the writer August von Kotzebue was murdered by *Burschenschaftler* Karl Ludwig Sand. Metternich seized this opportunity to introduce the Carlsbad Decrees, implementing stricter censorship, banning political meetings and purging outspoken professors.⁴² Grillparzer was directly affected by these measures. *König Ottokar* was held back by the censor for two years and only performed in 1825 after the empress intervened.⁴³ Grillparzer’s chance encounter with the official responsible revealed the reasoning behind the decision: ‘gar nichts [...], aber ich dachte mir: man kann doch nicht wissen’ (GW, XIV: 105).

⁴¹ Lorenz, ‘State’, p. 13.

⁴² Clark, ‘Germany’, pp. 44-45.

⁴³ Gertrud Maria Rösch, ‘Geschichte und Gesellschaft im Drama’, in *Hansers Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur: Zwischen Restauration und Revolution 1815-1848*, ed. by Gert Sautermeister and Ulrich Schmid (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1998), pp. 378-420 (pp. 386-389).

Grillparzer's literary career was thwarted by arbitrary laws, restrictions and misinterpretations. A prime example was the emperor's outraged response to 'Campo Vaccino' (1819). The poem in praise of the glories of ancient Rome was interpreted as a critique of the modern age and attack on Catholicism. Grillparzer believed this episode permanently damaged his literary and civil service careers.⁴⁴ He felt Austria was a land hostile to poetry and the noblest spiritual aspirations (*GW*, XV: 114). In 1827, he wrote:

Auszeichnung hier erwarte nie,
Denn das System verbeuts,
Man hängt das Kreuz nicht ans Genie,
Nein, das Genie ans Kreuz. (*GW*, II: 217)

Grillparzer perceived his life in the 1820s as an eternal conflict 'mit Dummheit und Schlechtigkeit' (*GW*, XV: 119). His historical dramas of the decade bewail the burden of public duty and imply criticism of the repressive state. Roe identifies the 1830 July Revolution in Paris as a turning point in Grillparzer's political awareness when he engaged with politics on a European-wide scale.⁴⁵ Grillparzer's most radical political convictions emerged in the 1830s, for example his assertion in a diary entry that it would be favourable for France to progress towards a democratic form of government than to support the kind of constraints he suffered in Austria (*GW*, XV: 154). In September 1831, Grillparzer wrote the poem 'Warschau' praising the Polish uprising of 1830 and lamenting the all too brief appearance of freedom (*GW*, I: 94-97). The Hambach Festival in 1832 was the first political demonstration in modern German history.⁴⁶ At least twenty-thousand protestors gathered demanding greater liberty, civil rights and national unity.⁴⁷ The festival achieved little: weeks

⁴⁴ Roe, *Major Works*, p. 7.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

⁴⁶ Clark, 'Germany', p. 54.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

later Metternich extended the Carlsbad Decrees, strengthening repressive politics.⁴⁸

Grillparzer continued to support liberal movements at home and abroad, such as the victory of liberal forces in Spain over the Carlist reactionaries in 1836. He hoped such events might have a beneficial influence on Austria's internal affairs (*GW*, XV: 284).

Grillparzer's private writings of the 1830s testify to a desire for political reform in line with liberal views of the decade.⁴⁹ In 1839, when Metternich was falsely reported to be near death, Grillparzer wrote a damning study of the Chancellor's career, rating him a sound diplomat but a poor statesman (*GW*, XI: 98-110). In an epigram of the same year Grillparzer dismissed Metternich's achievements:

Hier liegt, für seinen Ruhm zu spät,
Der Don Quixotte der Legitimität. (*GW*, II: 245)

Grillparzer deplored Metternich's repressive regime, which had led to 'dieses passive Stehenbleiben, dieses Nichtweiterrschreiten auf dem Pfade der Entwicklung' (*GW*, XV: 101).

Grillparzer held the stasis of the Habsburg police state in part responsible for the upsurge in nationalism in the 1840s, to which the government could muster no adequate response.⁵⁰

The death of Francis I in 1835 and the succession of his eldest son Ferdinand, who was mentally and physically incapable of leadership, further impeded social, economic and political development.⁵¹ Divisions grew between radical liberals, who advocated democracy and republicanism, and moderates, who desired a constitution with a liberal monarch, equality before the law, freedom of speech and religious toleration. Grillparzer aligned

⁴⁸ Hans-Jörg Knobloch, 'Literatur und Politik im 19. Jahrhundert', in *Das verschlafene 19. Jahrhundert?: zur deutschen Literatur zwischen Klassik und Moderne*, ed. by Hans-Jörg Knobloch and Helmut Koopmann (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005) pp. 11-22, (pp. 16-17).

⁴⁹ Thompson, 'Grillparzer', pp. 82-83.

⁵⁰ Beller, *Austria*, p. 115. For details of Metternich's failure to implement necessary reforms in Italy see Sked, *Decline and Fall*, pp. 32-34.

⁵¹ Beller, *Austria*, p. 117.

himself with the moderate camp.⁵² He supported gradual reform, yet grew concerned about escalating opposition to the government. Grillparzer distrusted calls for wholesale liberation.

In an epigram of 1840 entitled 'Liberalismus' he warned:

Lern erst, was Freiheit will zu recht bedeuten,
Ehe Wort und Wahlspruch du entlehnt von ihr. (GW, II: 248)

Political opposition to the Habsburg regime intensified in the 1840s.⁵³ Metternich tackled dissent in Hungary by backing Dessewffy's 'neo-conservatives', who aimed to undermine the Hungarian county system, which granted nobles a degree of political involvement, by replacing elected officials with administrators appointed by Vienna.⁵⁴ German nationalism gathered pace in 1840 when an aggressive French foreign policy under Thiers and calls from the Parisian press for re-conquest of the Rhineland provoked a war scare and with it a sudden upsurge in German national feeling.⁵⁵ Germany experienced another wave of national sentiment in 1846 in response to perceived Danish aggression over the succession dispute in Schleswig-Holstein.⁵⁶ Civil war broke out in Switzerland in 1847 culminating in defeat for conservatives and for Metternich, who had tried to intervene on their behalf.⁵⁷ Escalating political dissent combined with social unrest exacerbated by industrialisation and poor harvests in 1846 and 1847 increased pressure on the authorities. The final signal for revolt came from Paris in February 1848 when Louis Philippe fled the capital and a republic was proclaimed.⁵⁸

⁵² Thompson, 'Grillparzer', p. 83.

⁵³ Evans, *Austria, Hungary, and the Habsburgs*, p. 250.

⁵⁴ Sked, *Decline and Fall*, pp. 35-36.

⁵⁵ David Blackbourn, *History of Germany 1780-1918: The Long Nineteenth Century*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), p. 97.

⁵⁶ William Carr, *A History of Germany 1815-1945* (London: Edward Arnold, 1969), pp. 30-32.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁵⁸ Clark, 'Germany', p. 59; Sked, *Decline and Fall*, pp. 75-82; and Carr, *Germany*, p. 41.

Grillparzer recorded his reactions to events in 1848 in four 'Aufrufe' addressed to the revolutionaries. His initial response of 13-15 March was cautious optimism. He welcomed the atmosphere of freedom after the dismissals of Metternich and Sedlnitzky, the chief of police, and praised the moderation shown by normal people. Nevertheless, he stressed the importance of laws and insisted the government must continue to function.⁵⁹ The arrival of the radical Hungarian liberal leader Lajos Kossuth on 15 March, demanding a separate Hungarian ministry prompted Grillparzer to warn against the dangers of nationalism.⁶⁰ In May, further concessions to students in Vienna prompted the publication of Grillparzer's controversial poem 'Feldmarschall Radetzky' (*GW*, I: 117), commending victories of the Imperial Army over nationalist revolutionaries in Italy.⁶¹ This apparent support for the government led Grillparzer to be equated with conservative reactionaries in the minds of revolutionaries and scholars alike. Yet the poem should not be viewed as an endorsement of the imperial government, but rather as recognition of the importance of the army for the survival of the empire as a whole.⁶² Grillparzer desired gradual reform within a stable, functioning government.⁶³ Roe rejects any notion of Grillparzer as a radical conservative or political quietist. Grillparzer expressed approval for 'einfach stilles Volk' (*DKV*, II: 524) in early plays, but later dismissed passivity as impossible and ill-advised, even a potential source of inhumanity, as exemplified by 'der stille Kaiser Rudolf' (*GW*, XIV: 125).⁶⁴ Grillparzer found no contentment in withdrawal and never ceased to engage with political issues, though not always publicly. The angry responses of radicals to 'Feldmarschall Radetzky' and Grillparzer's

⁵⁹ Roe, *Major Works*, p. 244.

⁶⁰ Evans, *Austria, Hungary and the Habsburgs*, pp. 173-174; Thompson, 'Grillparzer', p. 85; and Fichtner, *The Habsburg Empire*, p. 42.

⁶¹ Roe, *Major Works*, p. 244; and Thompson, 'Grillparzer', p. 85.

⁶² Thompson, 'Grillparzer', p. 86.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-90; and Lorenz, 'State', p. 12.

⁶⁴ Roe, 'Quietism', pp. 227-233.

association with the patriotic 'Schwarzgelben' forced him to flee Vienna in June and again in October 1848, at which point he wrote his will, fearing a violent death.⁶⁵ In the 1850s, when danger of revolution subsided, Grillparzer supported various reformist measures. He opposed Francis Joseph's reassertion of reactionary measures such as the New Year's Eve Patent of 1851, which withdrew the constitution of 1849.⁶⁶ In 1868, as a member of the *Herrenhaus*, Grillparzer voted to repeal the Concordat of 1855, which placed marital law and education under jurisdiction of the Catholic Church.⁶⁷ Grillparzer supported reform, but feared violence: he understood the cost of extreme behaviour.

2. Grillparzer and Traditions of German Drama

This preliminary account of Grillparzer's politics relies primarily on epigrams, diary entries and essays. These linear forms cannot convey all the complexities and contradictions central to Grillparzer's outlook, which emerge prominently through the multidimensional dramatic form. His historical dramas provide further evidence of his political opinions, though he offers more than a purely political response to the issues of his age: philosophical and moral questions have a profound influence on his works. Grillparzer's aesthetics – the values and formal issues shaping his dramas – play a key role in illustrating the problematic nature of the wider questions he tackles. The richness and diversity of history and human life are portrayed through a complex intermingling of plots, as well as the depiction of a multitude of psychologically complex characters. By introducing diffuse, unwieldy detail to his plays, Grillparzer demonstrates the impossibility of confining history to a strict metaphysical system such as Hegel envisaged. The ambivalence central to Grillparzer's aesthetics

⁶⁵ Thompson, 'Grillparzer', pp. 87-88.

⁶⁶ Blackbourn, *Germany*, p. 172.

⁶⁷ Lorenz, 'State', p. 16.

highlights the psychological complexity of humanity and the problematic nature of political action.

Commentators are divided over Grillparzer's position within dominant literary movements. Many scholars ascribe him to one tradition: Ernst Alker associates Grillparzer with Baroque traditions,⁶⁸ whilst Josef Nadler hails him as the 'great Austrian classicist'.⁶⁹ In contrast, Walter Höllerer argues that aspects of Grillparzer's language and style recall more 'modern' writers Büchner and Grabbe. Höllerer anticipates recent analyses of Grillparzer as an ambivalent, transitional figure, with his depiction of a dramatist striving for order and synthesis but unable to achieve such goals.⁷⁰ Lorenz emphasises the atmosphere of upheaval in Grillparzer's plays, which she considers typical of the nineteenth century. She perceives a deliberate break from Weimar Classicism as Grillparzer became aware of his own social, cultural and linguistic background.⁷¹ Roe acknowledges Grillparzer's attachment to Austrian traditions. He combines the image of a dramatist torn between traditions of Viennese theatre and the form and 'human' themes of Weimar Classicism, with recognition of Grillparzer's psychological insight.⁷² Grillparzer was a disciple of the Enlightenment and of Josephinism, yet acutely aware of socio-political developments underway in the nineteenth century, which challenged these traditions. He drew on a wealth of aesthetic traditions to observe, question and comment on contemporary issues. As Rolf Geissler observes: 'Grillparzer ist einer der hell- und weitsichtigsten politischen Köpfe des 19. Jahrhunderts'.⁷³

⁶⁸ Roe, *Century of Criticism*, p. 11.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

⁷¹ Dagmar C. G. Lorenz, *Grillparzer: Dichter des sozialen Konflikts*, (Vienna: Böhlau, 1986), pp. 11-22.

⁷² Roe, *Major Works*, pp. 13-14.

⁷³ Rolf Geissler, 'Grillparzer und die Zukunft', *JbGG*, 19 (1996), pp. 109- 123 (p. 110).

Scholars rightly associate Grillparzer with Weimar Classicism, a key, but contested epoch in literary history.⁷⁴ The movement was strongly associated with a small group of authors, primarily Goethe and Schiller, residing in the duchy of Saxe-Weimar.⁷⁵ Rising to the challenge offered by Winckelmann to become 'unnachahmlich' through 'Nachahmung' of classical models, Goethe and Schiller embarked on a project of cultural and political reform through aesthetic intervention.⁷⁶ Living in a period of social fragmentation, political ferment and violence culminating in the French Revolution, they were keenly aware of the difference between the organic wholeness of classical Athenian society, and the dissent and lack of balance of post-revolutionary Europe. They created art that was complete in itself, existing in an ideal realm parallel and distinct from human reality. Humanity was in need of aesthetic education.⁷⁷ Art was a mediator through which man could overcome the oppositions of life to learn balance and harmony.⁷⁸ Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (1787) is often referred to as the work that best embodies Weimar Classicism.⁷⁹ 'Classical' implies a conjunction of formal features, thematic aspects and ethical goals. *Iphigenie* adheres to the unities of time, place and action of Aristotelian tragedy, sustains an elevated, declamatory style and celebrates humane conduct. Self-discipline and balance are asserted from the outset and achieved in the finale: Iphigenie transforms barbarism into 'pure humanity', even convincing the

⁷⁴ R. H. Stephenson, *Studies in Weimar Classicism: Writing as Symbolic Form* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), p. 91.

⁷⁵ Simon Richter, 'Weimar Classicism', *The Literary Encyclopedia*, 18 September 2004, p. 1 [http://www.litencyc.com/php/stopics.php?rec=true&UID=1476, accessed 17 August 2010].

⁷⁶ 'Der einzige Weg für uns, groß ja, wenn es möglich ist, unnachahmlich zu werden, ist die Nachahmung der Alten.' Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1969), p. 4; also see Richter, 'Weimar Classicism', p. 1.

⁷⁷ Friedrich Schiller, *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (1795). Simon Richter identifies this essay as the manifesto of Weimar Classicism. See Richter 'Weimar Classicism', p. 2.

⁷⁸ Richter, 'Weimar Classicism', pp. 1-3.

⁷⁹ Dieter Borchmeyer, 'What is Classicism?', in *Camden House History of Literature, VII: The Literature of Weimar Classicism*, ed. by Simon Richter (Rochester: Camden House, 2005), pp. 45-63 (p. 58).

barbarian leader Thoas to renounce his claim on her.⁸⁰ Weimar Classicism remains one of cultural history's most sustained and remarkable projects in aesthetic transformation.⁸¹

Grillparzer turned to art in response to the political imbalance and human suffering he perceived in the nineteenth century. In a similar way, Goethe and Schiller had seen the aesthetic realm as a possible corrective to the barbarity and devastation of the French Revolution. Acute social unrest and political confrontation in the 1840s convinced Grillparzer he lived in a time of cultural regression,⁸² reflected in his apparent nostalgia in 1844 for the age of Weimar Classicism:

Nur weiter geht ihr tolles Treiben,
Von vorwärts! Vorwärts! erschallt das Land:
Ich möchte, wärs möglich, stehen bleiben,
Wo Schiller und Goethe stand. (GW, II: 270)

Lampert argues Grillparzer considered himself an heir to Weimar Classicism. He perceived the theatre as an institution with educative and civilising potential as Goethe and Schiller had done: the audience entered as 'people' and left as 'human beings'.⁸³ He praised the classical project in epigrams and poems and explored classical themes through drama. He was enraged by the nationalist politicisation of German classical heritage, such as the use of Schiller as a symbol of German unification.⁸⁴ In 1853 he wrote:

Was setzt ihr ihnen [Goethe and Schiller] Bilder von Stein
Als könnten sie jemals vergessen sein?
Wollt ihr sie aber wirklich ehren,
So folgt ihrem Beispiel und horcht ihren Lehren. (GW, II: 299)

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 58-59.

⁸¹ Richter, 'Weimar Classicism', p. 5.

⁸² Robertson, 'Failure of Enlightenment', pp. 165-168.

⁸³ F. J. Lampert, *German Classical Drama: Theatre, Humanity and Nation 1750-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 182.

⁸⁴ For further details see Langer, 'Deutsche Reichsgründung', p. 328; and Blackbourn, *Germany*, p. 181.

It is difficult to define precisely what Grillparzer understood by classical ideals. Roe highlights the lack of detail in Grillparzer's discussion of these principles.⁸⁵ Grillparzer retained the classical ideal of form and beauty, as well as regard for tragedy as the most dignified dramatic form. Yet his relationship with Weimar Classicism remained ambivalent: he identified himself as a citizen of Weimar, yet after his visit to Germany in 1826 expressed disappointment at the reality he encountered (*GW*, XV: 134).⁸⁶ Grillparzer admired the ambitions of Weimar, the desire to overcome the fundamental oppositions of human life and seek wholeness.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, he did not attempt to resolve nineteenth-century problems in drama, but rather expressed discontentment and explored the contradictions central to human existence. Grillparzer sought to renovate classical form. He felt Goethe's drama lacked a sense of theatre:

Seine Personen sagen gewöhnlich alles was sich über einen Gegenstand Großes und Schönes sagen läßt [...], aber dramatisch ist es nicht. Daher kömmt es, daß Goethes Stücke sich so schön lesen und so schlecht darstellen. (*GW*, XIII: 353)

Grillparzer was greatly influenced by his Austrian cultural heritage. The Congress of Vienna established the city as the headquarters of post-Napoleonic European Restoration. Cultural revival accompanied political resurgence as the Burgtheater flourished under Josef Schreyvogel and gained a reputation as the foremost serious German theatre.⁸⁸ The popular theatre also thrived, embracing a range of comedy: plays of moral improvement, satire,

⁸⁵ Roe, *Major Works*, p. 15.

⁸⁶ Roger Bauer, 'Grillparzers Aufklärung', in *Zwischen Weimar und Wien: Grillparzer Ein Innsbrucker Symposium*, ed. by Sieglinde Klettenhammer (Innsbruck: Institut für Germanistik, 1992), pp. 13-31 (pp. 24-27).

⁸⁷ Robert Pichl, 'Grillparzers Dramaturgische Emanzipation von der Weimarer Klassik', *JbGG*, 22 (2007-08), 51-65 (pp. 51-56).

⁸⁸ Lampport, *Classical Drama*, pp. 181-182.

farce and musical theatre.⁸⁹ Grillparzer's Viennese roots had a profound influence. In 1844 he wrote:

Nur wer vom Kahlenberg das Land sich rings besehen,
Wird was ich schrieb und wer ich bin verstehen. (GW, II: 262)

Grillparzer departed from the 'excessively literary character' of Goethe's drama and, whilst remaining loyal to classical ideals, instilled his plays with theatricality.⁹⁰ He added new dimensions through intertwining plots, use of costume, props and extensive stage directions. The dramas offer no resolution, but rather stress the irresolvable and complex nature of human existence.⁹¹ Grillparzer emancipated himself from Weimar by focusing not on the conflict between ideal and reality, but instead tackling conflicts within the real world, between private and public life. Schiller considered human will, similarly to Kant, as a rational faculty through which the irrational, animal side of human nature could be overcome and to assert moral worth.⁹² Grillparzer perceived the will as irrational and part of the individual's animal not spiritual nature, embroiling them in the world rather than enabling them to rise above it: this divergence is apparent in his character portraits.⁹³ Grillparzer takes an empirical approach, exploring psychological subtleties and conveying the ambivalence of life.⁹⁴

In terms of Grillparzer's treatment of historical drama, scholars disagree over his intentions. Scholars have distinguished different forms and functions of historical drama of

⁸⁹ Ibid; for more details also see Reinhart Meyer, 'Komödien', in *Hansers Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur: Zwischen Restauration und Revolution 1815-1848*, ed. by Gert Sautermeister und Ulrich Schmid (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1998), pp. 421-433 (pp. 425-433).

⁹⁰ Lamport, *Classical Drama*, p. 199.

⁹¹ Robert Pichl, 'Grillparzer als Dramatiker des "Frührealismus" zwischen Kleist und Büchner', *JbGG*, 21 (2003-2006), 51-65 (pp. 63-64).

⁹² Lamport, *Classical Drama*, p. 184.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Pichl, 'Frührealismus', pp. 63-64.

the period and discerned several broad categories: historical drama, which took pleasure in depicting the local colour of the past; the ethically-oriented tragic drama of Weimar Classicism, aiming at moral improvement in the present; the portrayal of national history, in the style of Shakespeare, to glorify the present moment; and political historical drama, in which the past is used to illuminate and address present socio-political problems.⁹⁵

Schiller's *Wallenstein* (1798) is an example of ethically-oriented historical drama of particular importance for Grillparzer. Schiller's historical thinking was deeply rooted in the Enlightenment. A fervent idealist, human universal values were paramount for Schiller and 'über allen Einfluß der Zeit erhoben'.⁹⁶ His aim in *Wallenstein* was 'theatralisch-tragisch'.⁹⁷ He wished to emancipate the tragic material from the 'Staatskunst' in which it was embedded, to create an ideal realm outside reality from which to instigate man's aesthetic education as a corrective to the faults of the real world.⁹⁸ Schiller's dramatic intentions differed significantly from Shakespeare's, who staged significant national events from the past to glorify the present.⁹⁹ Grabbe also employed national themes to depict present reality. He described Shakespeare as a model for 'das nationale und zugleich echt dramatisch historische Schauspiel'.¹⁰⁰

Grillparzer stands poised between ethical and patriotic modes of historical drama. His preoccupation with classical themes reveals an interest in ethical questions, yet his historical

⁹⁵ For further detail see Gerd Heinemann, 'Historische und mythologische Dramen', in *Deutsche Literatur: Eine Sozialgeschichte*, ed. by Horst Albert Glaser, VI: *Vormärz, Biedermeier, Junges Deutschland, Demokraten 1815-1848*, ed. by Bernd Witte (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1980), pp. 263-275; and Rösch, 'Geschichte', pp. 386-420.

⁹⁶ From Schiller's 'Die Horen' (1795); cited in Alan Menhennet, *The Historical Experience in German Drama: From Gryphius to Brecht* (Rochester: Camden House, 2003), p. 49.

⁹⁷ In a letter written to Goethe in 1799; see *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁹⁸ Menhennet, *Historical Experience*, pp. 48-58; and Simon Richter, 'Introduction', in *The Literature of Weimar Classicism*, ed. by Simon Richter (Rochester: Camden House, 2005), pp. 3-44 (pp. 9-17).

⁹⁹ Alan Menhennet, 'Grillparzer, Shakespeare and Historical Drama', *GLL*, 44, 1991, 208-233 (pp. 209-210).

¹⁰⁰ Grabbe, *Über die Shakspeare-Manie* (1827). See Heinemann, 'Dramen', p. 264.

dramas focus on questions of national significance: Austria and the Habsburgs. Lampport stresses similarities between the historical and political relevance of *König Ottokar* and Shakespeare's *Richard III*: both celebrate the founding of a dynasty that continued to rule in the playwright's own day, as well as the supposed re-establishment of order and peace after a period of chaos and tyranny.¹⁰¹ Yet Grillparzer does not approach national issues in the fiercely patriotic way Kleist did in *Die Hermannsschlacht* (1809), but rather portrays patriotism as problematic and dangerous.¹⁰² Grillparzer's treatment of history enabled him to reflect and comment on developments in his own age. This approach associates the dramatist with writers such as Grabbe and Büchner, who criticised social conditions and sought political reform through drama.¹⁰³

As censorship laws became increasingly rigorous, historical drama emerged as a means through which to portray and criticise present reality.¹⁰⁴ In *Dantons Tod* (1835), Büchner drew extensively on historical sources to explore the conflict between individual and society and illuminate the depth of social problems in his own time. Büchner presented the French Revolution as based on political theatre and corruption, mobilizing political awareness in the present by encouraging audiences to reflect on the brutal nature of revolutionary activity. In *Woyzeck* (1837), Büchner drew on historical events with poetic licence to portray poverty and exploitation as key issues in the protagonist's murder of Marie.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Lampport, *Classical Drama*, p. 189.

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 187-188; and Lorenz, 'The State', p. 11.

¹⁰³ Rösch, 'Geschichte', pp. 395-420.

¹⁰⁴ Heinemann, 'Dramen', p. 265.

¹⁰⁵ Benjamin Bennett, 'The Absence of Drama in Nineteenth-Century Germany', in *German Literature of the Nineteenth Century: 1832-1899*, ed. by Eric Downing and Clayton Koelb (Columbia: Camden House, 2005), pp. 157-182 (pp. 169-170). See also John Reddick, *Georg Büchner: The Shattered Whole* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). Reddick disputes that poverty was a key cause of Woyzeck's behaviour.

Though Grillparzer was less radical, he too depicted past traumas to illuminate present troubles. Another mode of historical drama applicable to Grillparzer is that outlined by Heinemann and Rösch based on religious and mythological foundations.¹⁰⁶ This category includes Hebbel's *Judith* (1838/40), based on stories from the Old Testament; and *Genoveva* (1843), informed by legends of the Middle Ages.¹⁰⁷ *Ein treuer Diener* is a historical-mythological drama, as Grillparzer used material from both Habsburg history and legend. Heinemann argues that Grillparzer's dramas evoke a past utopia to overcome disillusionment with a hostile present.¹⁰⁸ Yet the implicit criticism apparent in the dramas suggests Grillparzer was more politically engaged than Heinemann's interpretation allows. As Rösch confirms, use of history and myth in drama were methods of alluding to the present.¹⁰⁹ Examination of Grillparzer's historical dramas demonstrates the various ways in which he used historical material to engage with socio-political developments of his age and to grapple with history in a broader sense.

The following chapters consider the three historical dramas *König Ottokar*, *Ein treuer Diener* and *Bruderzwist* in turn. Grillparzer's source work and his reworking of material from the history of the Empire will be explored. His motives when writing each drama will be discussed as well as the reactions of audiences and the authorities. It is argued that a coherent set of themes emerges in these plays. Grillparzer's presentation of leadership figures is a central element as is the interplay between private and public spheres, and themes of justice and morality. These key concepts will be explored alongside Grillparzer's

¹⁰⁶ Heinemann, 'Dramen', pp. 273-274; and Rösch, 'Geschichte', pp. 403-406.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Heinemann, 'Dramen', p. 275.

¹⁰⁹ Rösch, 'Geschichte', p. 404.

use of form and stagecraft. This reveals a great deal about the dramatist's aesthetic response to the political concerns of his age as well as broader philosophical and historical questions. The analysis illuminates the link between Grillparzer's aesthetics and his political outlook, revealing that in contrast to the widespread view of Grillparzer as a conservative, quietist figure, he was in fact highly engaged, though not always publicly, in the discussion of socio-political issues, and debates surrounding philosophies of history. In aesthetic terms, Grillparzer did not only draw inspiration from Weimar Classicism and Viennese theatre. The historical dramas reveal Grillparzer's psychological insight and political critique anticipating modern drama. Grillparzer was not afraid to explore irrational and disruptive elements in human nature for the dramas revolve around the complexity and ambivalence of human existence.

KÖNIG OTTOKARS GLÜCK UND ENDE

Grillparzer spent three years studying the historical material for *König Ottokar* before he started writing the play over the course of four weeks during February and March 1823. The play was held back by the censor for two years and as such provoked great interest when it was finally performed in February 1825. Despite, or perhaps, as a result of these high expectations, Grillparzer sensed disappointment in the audience, though retrospectively he paid tribute to *König Ottokar* as one of his greatest literary achievements.¹

This chapter explores Grillparzer's reworking of historical material for *König Ottokar*. The focus shall be on what Grillparzer perceived as the changing nature of leadership at the start of the nineteenth century, exemplified in the contrast between the rulers Ottokar and Rudolf. The strengths and weaknesses of these leadership models shall be considered in relation to the changing role of the monarch. It becomes increasingly apparent that the success or failure of rulers in *König Ottokar* is linked irrevocably to issues such as relations between the monarch and his people, the relationship between ethics and politics and the interplay between private and public life. The inseparable nature of the private and political affairs of public figures is a key concern in Grillparzer's historical dramas. Grillparzer demonstrates this correlation by combining subtle psychological analysis, including depiction of shifting gender roles and external pressures acting on protagonists, with the representation of affairs of government in a changing socio-political environment. Grillparzer

¹ See Helmut Bachmeier's notes on *König Ottokar* in *DKV*, II: 830-831 and 848-850.

presents a political ethic in which those who falter in private affairs are doomed on the public stage.

Grillparzer's interest in the changing nature of leadership was inspired in part by Napoleon's domination of Europe and its aftermath. Grillparzer witnessed Napoleon's occupation of Austria first-hand. For Grillparzer, Napoleon inspired both awe and loathing. His defeat heralded a new era in which it was hoped the chaotic power politics of the tyrant would be replaced by greater cooperation between countries and more open systems of government propounding peace and stability. The means by which this order could be achieved was, however, a subject of intense debate. Scholars highlight similarities between the fates of Ottokar and Napoleon, similarities both Grillparzer and the censor recognised. Grillparzer admits it was this association that drew him to the *Ottokar*-material (*SB*: 148-149). He considered it an impossible task to confine Napoleon's history to a form suitable for drama, yet considered Ottokar a suitable subject for his dramatic intentions.² In his *Selbstbiographie*, Grillparzer reviewed the leaders and his motives for choosing this material:

Beide wenn auch in ungeheuerem Abstände, tatkräftige Männer, Eroberer, ohne eigentliche Bösartigkeit durch die Umstände zur Härte, wohl gar Tyrannei fortgetrieben, nach vieljährigem Glück dasselbe traurige Ende, zuletzt der Umstand, daß den Wendepunkt von beider Schicksal die Trennung ihrer ersten Ehe und eine zweite Heirat gebildet hatte. Wenn nun zugleich aus dem Untergange Ottokars die Gründung der Habsburgischen Dynastie in Österreich hervorging, so war das für einen österreichischen Dichter eine unbezahlbare Gottesgabe und setzte dem Ganzen die Krone auf. Es war also nicht Napoleons Schicksal, das ich in Ottokar schildern wollte, aber schon eine entfernte Ähnlichkeit begeisterte mich. (*SB*: 148-149)

It seems Ottokar and the form of leadership he represents was Grillparzer's main interest.

Grillparzer claims the coinciding of Ottokar's demise with the beginning of the Habsburg dynasty was simply a happy coincidence. He underlines Ottokar's divorce and remarriage as

² See Bachmeier's commentary in *DKV*, II: 832.

a crucial turning point in his fortunes, whilst also revealing his sympathies with Ottokar and Napoleon: they were not evil figures, but resorted to tyranny due to the force of circumstances. This passage appears to undermine interpretations of early commentators who viewed the drama as a conservative statement of permanence and patriotic celebration of the Habsburg dynasty.³ Nevertheless, Grillparzer's comments seem intentionally ambiguous.⁴ Ian Roe maintains *König Ottokar* is the closest Grillparzer came to perpetuating the 'Habsburg myth' and expresses reservations about taking the author's view as authoritative.⁵ Grillparzer wrote his autobiography with the gift of hindsight, thus this passage may represent a form of self-justification following his later loss of confidence in the Habsburg monarchy.⁶ Eckhard Heftrich argues that interpretations of *König Ottokar* as an affirmation of Habsburg dominion ignore key strands that imply criticism and Grillparzer's many private reservations about Metternich's policies.⁷

Grillparzer's primary source was the fourteenth-century *Reimchronik* of Ottokar von Steiermark (*SB*: 149).⁸ Considering his treatment of and divergence from this source reveals insight into his intentions. *König Ottokar* was Grillparzer's first venture into the history of his own country. The play is set during the reign of Przemysl Ottokar, who by a combination of military victories and a diplomatic marriage acquired control of a large part of central Europe

³ Friedrich Gundolf, 'Franz Grillparzer', *Jahrbuch des Freien Deutschen Hochstifts*, 8 (1931), 9-93; see Walter Silz, 'Grillparzer's Ottokar', *Germanic Review*, 39 (1964), 243-261 (p. 243).

⁴ Birthe Hoffmann, 'König Ottokar und kein Ende: Zur Anthropologie Franz Grillparzers', *JbGG*, 20 (2002), 188-220 (p. 191).

⁵ Claudio Magris, *Der habsburgische Mythos in der österreichischen Literatur* (Salzburg: O. Müller, 1966); cited by Ian F. Roe, *An Introduction to the Major Works of Franz Grillparzer, 1791-1872, Austrian Dramatist* (New York: Mellen, 1991), p. 116.

⁶ Roe, *Major Works*, pp. 211-214.

⁷ Eckhard Heftrich, 'Grillparzer: *König Ottokars Glück und Ende*', in *Geschichte als Schauspiel*, ed. by Walter Hinck (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006), pp. 164-178 (p. 165). Also see my Introduction regarding Grillparzer's opposition to Metternich and his policies in private writings.

⁸ For more detail on Grillparzer's sources for the play see Bachmeier's commentary in *DKV*, II: 854-858; and Heftrich, 'Grillparzer', p. 166.

and established himself as a viable successor to the Babenberg line of Austrian rulers, which died out in 1246. As an ultimate proof of his power, Ottokar coveted the largely honorary title of Holy Roman Emperor. When in 1273 Rudolf von Habsburg was elected, Ottokar refused to acknowledge him, but was defeated in 1278 at the Battle of Marchfeld.⁹ Rudolf's election ended sixteen years of interregnum in Germany. The first Habsburg king possessed relatively modest territory and influence in comparison to the powerful King Ottokar II of Bohemia. Ottokar married Margarethe (1251) to secure lands in Austria. In 1260, he became the leader of Styria and in 1270, conquered Carinthia. His remarriage to Kunigunde of Macedonia (1260), the niece of the Hungarian King Bela, secured his influence over the Hungarian lands.¹⁰ Kubitschek argues that the choice of Rudolf as Holy Roman Emperor was determined by the electors' desire to increase their power and undermine the influence of the powerful Bohemian ruler, suggesting that Rudolf's election was the result of his relative weakness compared to Ottokar.¹¹ The electors feared Ottokar had become too powerful and hoped Rudolf would be more controllable. Though historically this is plausible, Grillparzer did not focus on this idea. He utilised the framework of the power struggle to portray the changes he perceived in the politics of his age.

Grillparzer preserved aspects of historical accuracy when writing the play, yet his chosen modifications to the chronology of events and the time-span are substantial and significant. There was a ten-year gap between Ottokar's divorce and the decline of his fortunes. Grillparzer omits this so that the divorce and remarriage are immediately followed

⁹ Roe, *Major Works*, p. 98; and Heftrich, 'Grillparzer', pp. 166-167.

¹⁰ Peter Kubitschek, "'O Gott, wo find' ich Menschen?": Franz Grillparzers *König Ottokars Glück und Ende* *Zeitschrift für Germanistik*, 10 (1989), 151-169 (pp. 151-155).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

by a rapid decline in Ottokar's fortunes. As such, this episode is presented as pivotal, having a direct impact on the decision to elect Rudolf. Grillparzer also excludes mention of the two children Ottokar had by Kunigunde. This is significant, as various commentators including Roe, Gerlach and Reeve argue that Kunigunde's sexual rejection of her husband contributes substantially to Ottokar's reckless and fatal defiance of Rudolf.¹² Grillparzer's modifications act primarily to intensify the correlation between Ottokar's private and public life. This highlights the essentially classical, ethical criteria on which the leaders are judged: Ottokar's immoral behaviour in his private life impacts directly on his political and military prowess. Roe argues that the influence of Weimar Classicism is particularly apparent in Grillparzer's early dramas. Grillparzer shows awareness and appreciation of the ideals of Goethe and Schiller, the central importance of humanity and the task of striving to develop one's full human potential through moderation, self-limitation, order and justice.¹³

Roe presents *König Ottokar* as Grillparzer's first historical drama, yet he was not unfamiliar with the form. Mark Ward highlights reservations Grillparzer voiced about the genre of historical drama. Grillparzer perceived an absence of formal control in contemporary realisations of historical drama, identifying the main difficulty in the density and unwieldiness of historical material.¹⁴ Nevertheless, historical drama was a form Grillparzer engaged with on many occasions. Between 1807 and 1815, he started work on no

¹² Roe, *Major Works*, pp. 111-116; U. Henry Gerlach, 'Die doppelte Peripetie in Grillparzers *König Ottokars Glück und Ende*', in *The Other Vienna: The Culture of Biedermeier Austria. Österreichisches Biedermeier in Literatur, Musik, Kunst und Kulturgeschichte*, ed. by Robert Pichl and Clifford A. Bernd (Vienna: Lehner, 2002), pp. 41-48 (pp. 44-48); William C. Reeve, 'Bitten versus Befehlen: Power Relations in Grillparzer's Dramas', *Colloquia Germanica: Internationale Zeitschrift für Germanistik*, 36 (2003), 119-140 (pp. 134-136).

¹³ Roe, *Major Works*, pp. 15-16.

¹⁴ Mark Ward, 'Reflections and Refractions: An Aspect of the Structure of Grillparzer's *König Ottokars Glück und Ende*', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 25 (1989), 209-224 (p. 210).

fewer than eight historical dramas, the majority remaining fragmentary.¹⁵ Grillparzer was relatively pleased with *König Ottokar*. In 1859, he declared, '*Ottokar* halte ich doch für mein bestes Stück, es ist zugleich ein ganz historisches Drama'.¹⁶ Despite Grillparzer's claims that this was a patriotic play – a predictable assertion in view of the strict censorship laws in place – he faced problems when attempting to publish and stage it, as discussed in the introduction. The episode in Act III when Otto von Horneck meets Rudolf points towards the reception Grillparzer may have desired from the state. Rudolf praises the writer's loyalty to Austria but does not attempt to use the *Reimchronik* as propaganda (*DKV*, II: 458-459). By contrast, Grillparzer faced continual obstructions: after seeing *König Ottokar*, Francis I is said to have remarked: 'Das ist gescheit, dass wir das Stück heute mit angeschaut haben, morgen wird's gewiß verboten'.¹⁷ *König Ottokar* enjoyed a mixed reception, as documented in a diary entry of 1828:

Obwohl nämlich das Stück bei der Aufführung sehr zu gefallen schien, so wendete sich doch die Meinung der sogenannten Gebildeten mit solcher Wuth gegen das Stück, daß ich kaum über die Gasse gehen konnte, ohne mich aufs bitterste verletzt zu finden. (*GW*, XIV: 143)

Grillparzer felt the audience had missed the point of his play. Critical opinion undermined Grillparzer's view of *König Ottokar*. More recently, Walter Silz has argued the play fails as a tragedy,¹⁸ whilst Ward and Roe commend the play's multi-dimensional structure and psychological subtleties.¹⁹

In terms of *König Ottokar's* relevance to the politics of the nineteenth century, recent commentators highlight a degree of implied criticism that was perceived but not fully

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ See Bachmeier's commentary in *DKV*, II: 850.

¹⁷ In a report from actor and writer Karl von Holtei; cited in Hoffmann, 'König Ottokar', p. 213.

¹⁸ Silz, 'Grillparzer's Ottokar', p. 251.

¹⁹ Ward, 'Reflections and Refractions', p. 222; and Roe, *Major Works*, p. 295.

grasped by the censor. *König Ottokar* is structured around antithesis and conflict, in particular, the central opposition between the leaders Ottokar and Rudolf. This is by no means, however, a play with two heroes. Scholars largely agree that Ottokar is the central interest of the play that takes his name, though opinions about the characterisation of the Bohemian king vary considerably. Ottokar has been interpreted as a brutal, arrogant tyrant who comes to a deservedly bad end, a view which persists with minor variations from Grillparzer's time to the present day.²⁰ Benno von Wiese considers Ottokar 'ein polternder, ungezügelter, ruhmstüchtiger Barbar',²¹ whilst Fricke rates him 'ein Durchschnittsmensch', his career a psychological study in the 'Großmannssucht eines Kleinen'.²² Silz highlights tensions in Grillparzer's characterisation of Ottokar. The king has some redeeming features, yet Silz argues Ottokar is an inadequate figure for tragedy, overshadowed by the 'angelic' portrait of Rudolf.²³ Maria Edlinger Stoffers rejects this assessment of Ottokar, which is based on the notion that by the end of Act III he has been too severely weakened. Stoffers argues that, physically, Ottokar continues to dominate the stage until Merenberg cuts him down on the battlefield.²⁴ Birthe Hoffmann captures the contradictory nature of Ottokar's characterisation in her appraisal of the protagonist as 'Aufklärer und Barbar zugleich'.²⁵ He endeavours to improve Prague socially and culturally, yet underestimates the need to

²⁰ Silz, 'Grillparzer's Ottokar', p. 243.

²¹ Benno von Wiese, *Die deutsche Tragödie von Lessing bis Hebbel*, 2. Aufl. (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1952), p. 411.

²² Gerhard Fricke, *Studien und Interpretationen* (Frankfurt am Main: Menck, 1956), p. 275.

²³ Silz, 'Grillparzer's Ottokar', p. 251.

²⁴ Maria Edlinger Stoffers, 'Grillparzers König Ottokar, Ein tragischer Held?', *JbGG*, 13 (1978), 39-49 (p. 44).

²⁵ Hoffmann, 'König Ottokar', pp. 191-192.

cultivate and maintain public support. From the outset, he appears a lone, vulnerable figure in the political sphere.²⁶

Ottokar is at times a highly unappealing figure. He acts arrogantly towards servants and delegates alike and appears an increasingly isolated figure, losing touch with the normal people and those around him (*DKV*, II: 407). Roe highlights Ottokar's lack of respect for the dignity of others. He fails to heed warnings, for example from the faithful Margarethe who declares 'Ihr steht am Abgrund' (*DKV*, II: 416). Ottokar is blind to the treachery of his closest allies, proclaiming 'kein Böhme hat noch seinen Herrn verraten' (*DKV*, II: 486). Despite these flaws, Grillparzer improved his hero in comparison to the image documented in the *Reimchronik*. Written from an Austrian perspective, the chronicle condemns Ottokar's divorce and attributes all his subsequent troubles to it. In the *Reimchronik*, Ottokar not only abandons Margarethe to live in privation, but ultimately orders her poisoned.²⁷ This source documents Ottokar's burning of Otto von Maissau and his savage killing of Merenberg as grounds for his non-election as Holy Roman Emperor.²⁸ Grillparzer omits the first atrocity. The second takes place after the election and is presented as accidental. At no point is Ottokar presented as coldly cruel. He acts under great emotional and political pressure.²⁹

Dagmar Lorenz concedes that Ottokar makes mistakes that bring about his fall, yet he reveals himself as a dynamic leader. During his 'triumph phase' he uses commanding, formulaic language. He has had many victories on the battlefield and young Merenberg

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ 'Und dô si niht wolt ligen tôt | wand in dûht zu lanc ir leben | dô hiez er ir vergeben | sûs nam diu frou ein ende.' *Österreichische Reimchronik*, ed. by Joseph Seemüller, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, V/1 (Hannover: Hahn, 1890), p. 124, lines 9375-78.

²⁸ Silz, 'Grillparzer's Ottokar', p. 248.

²⁹ Ibid.

considered him a role model (*DKV*, II: 505). Lorenz argues that the role of absolute monarch and the power that accompanies this status makes Ottokar's demise inevitable. She perceives the play as an attack on the monarchical system that isolates the individual leader, instilling this individual with excessive pride and limited foresight. It is only after Ottokar loses power and overcomes a phase of 'temporary madness' in Act IV, which Lorenz perceives as signalling a maturing process, that he recognises his wrongdoing (*DKV*, II: 501-504).³⁰ The tragedy of the play, for Lorenz, is that Ottokar is killed in Act V when he deserved another chance at life, when insight into his failings made him a more suitable leader than Rudolf.³¹ The audience witnesses and shares the Bohemian king's inner transformation as he kneels, willingly this time, before Margarethe's coffin and in a private prayer seeks forgiveness from his first wife and from God (*DKV*, II: 496). In contrast, Harald Steinhagen denies any change takes place in Ottokar. He claims Ottokar follows the same strategy throughout: 'Er ignoriert die Wirklichkeit oder versucht, sie mit Gewalt unter seinen Willen zu zwingen, wenn sie sich nicht ignorieren läßt'.³² Ottokar strives blindly for power and resorts to violence when an obstacle presents itself: 'Ich gehe meinen Gang, was hindert, fällt' (*DKV*, II: 415). Yet 'Recht', personified by Rudolf, is against him.³³

Steinhagen identifies political factors as central to Ottokar's downfall, namely the public nature of his separation from Margarethe and his refusal to surrender the territory he accumulated as a result of the marriage.³⁴ In contrast, Roe argues that those who question Ottokar's right to land and title do so on moral, not legal or political grounds. The Burggraf's

³⁰ Dagmar C. G. Lorenz, *Grillparzer: Dichter des sozialen Konflikts* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1986), pp. 118- 122.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

³² Harald Steinhagen, 'Grillparzers *König Ottokar* Drama: Geschichte und Zeitgeschichte', *JbDSG*, 14 (1970), 456-487 (p. 466).

³³ Hoffmann, 'König Ottokar', p. 193.

³⁴ Steinhagen, 'Grillparzer "König Ottokar"', p. 458.

declaration, 'Wir müssen einen gnädigen Fürsten haben, | Vor allem aber soll er sein gerecht' (DKV, II: 442), stresses the importance of the classical moral and ethical standards on which, Roe argues, the opposition between the leaders is founded.³⁵ Grillparzer's portrait of Rudolf adheres to classical ethical principles. The people's ruler, he cherishes humanitarian values. He acts with compassion and humility; for example on his first appearance, he enters as Margarethe's protector and counsel (DKV, II: 400). In Act III, he is shown happily at work, speaking to his people, including a child, and addressing servants by name, as the stage directions note:

Das Zelt öffnet sich. Kaiser Rudolf sitzt im ledernen Unterkleide an einem Feldtische. Er hat einen Helm vor sich, an dem er mit einem Hammer die Beulen ausklopft. Vollendend und zufrieden seine Arbeit beschauend. (DKV, II: 456)

Rudolf is aware of the hardship of the normal people. He is a model of moral correctness to such an extent that Roe sees the black-and-white distinction between good and evil in the play as exceeding the more cautious optimism of classical works and coming close to the exemplary allegories of the Baroque stage.³⁶ Ottokar's entrance forms a stark contrast to the humble image of Rudolf. The Bohemian king's entrances are heralded by majestic music and cheers (DKV, II: 406). Grillparzer uses changes in costume to convey Ottokar's fall from power: his change in attire from shining armour to the black cloak of a stage villain highlights the transformation that has taken place in his own confidence and the lost faith of those around him. Grillparzer's use of stage directions, costume and music to distinguish between the leaders reveals the influence of Viennese popular theatre.

³⁵ Roe, *Major Works*, p. 99.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

Rudolf is conventionally interpreted as an idealised defender of justice and humanity. Steinhagen perceives implied criticism in this portrait, as no ruler in Grillparzer's age could measure up to Rudolf, an ideal figure based on Josephinian standards of leadership.³⁷ Nevertheless, there is disagreement as to the sincerity of Rudolf's idealism. Lorenz sees Rudolf as a sinister figure. Regardless of expressed motives, he wishes to usurp Ottokar's position of power. Lorenz and Hoffmann compare Rudolf's attempts to be considered a man of the people to Francis I, who nevertheless executed oppressive policies.³⁸ They perceive Rudolf's grand speeches and overuse of religious terminology in Act V as indicators of fanaticism (*DKV*, II: 499). Lorenz argues that Rudolf's wish to become 'der Kaiser nur, der niemals stirbt' (*DKV*, II: 462) and his claims to speak as God's representative demonstrate evasion of personal responsibility. He is calculating and bloodless compared to Ottokar, whose motives and passions are expressed openly. Lorenz claims that Rudolf's humanitarian 'facade' conceals an asexual and clinical man comparable to a Robespierre. The emperor who presents himself as one with the people is a deceiver: birth and authority separate them.³⁹

Lorenz overstates her argument by stressing Rudolf's supposedly 'bloody rhetoric' and dismissing all humanitarian values voiced by Rudolf as false. Roe rejects claims that religious imagery used by Rudolf suggests evil under the surface.⁴⁰ Silz considers Rudolf an un-tragic figure, arousing no pity or fear in the audience, instead stressing that it is Zawisch's defiant cutting of the tent cord in Act III, exposing Ottokar kneeling before his rival, that secures the

³⁷ Steinhagen, 'Grillparzers "König Ottokar"', p. 487.

³⁸ Lorenz, *Dichter des sozialen Konflikts*, p. 126; and Hoffmann, 'König Ottokar', p. 197: Hoffmann argues that the scene between Rudolf and the child named Katharina Fröhlich was inspired by Grillparzer's fiancée's audience with Francis I as a nine year-old child.

³⁹ Lorenz, *Dichter des sozialen Konflikts*, pp. 123-126.

⁴⁰ Roe, *Major Works*, p. 106.

Bohemian king's downfall (*DKV*, II: 468), rather than action on Rudolf's part.⁴¹ For Hoffmann, Rudolf is simply a shrewder politician than Ottokar and better equipped to succeed in a modern political reality.⁴² Hoffmann's view does not incorporate issues of authenticity. Whilst Rudolf lacks Ottokar's psychological complexity, he achieves authenticity in ethical terms. Unwavering commitment to values of integrity, justice and humanity recalls classical models such as Goethe's Iphigenie, who gains authenticity through unequivocal commitment to humanity.⁴³ Grillparzer presents Rudolf as a symbol of legitimacy: his private and public values align and he understands the responsibilities that accompany leadership.

Grillparzer's portrayal of Rudolf I, who adheres to humanitarian principles both in his public and private life, implies that this is the standard Grillparzer proposes leaders should be judged by in a political world in which nothing remains private. Grillparzer's *König Ottokar* suggests not only that public and private spheres impinge upon one another, but that they are inseparable. Grillparzer makes this apparent through the sharply contrasting staging of two key moments of discovery in the play. During Act III, Rudolf is surprised to discover that he is being observed whilst working in his tent (*DKV*, II: 456). This industrious image acts to strengthen Rudolf's reputation as a humble leader. However, when Zawisch cuts the tent cords to reveal Ottokar secretly kneeling before his rival, this invasion of privacy exposes Ottokar to humiliation and scorn (*DKV*, II: 468). Ottokar's private behaviour becomes public knowledge and costs him the title of Holy Roman Emperor whereas exposure of Rudolf's private life elevates him further. Elisabeth, Margarethe's maid, empathises with Ottokar and bewails what she perceives as the loss of a leader's right to peace and solitude. This loss

⁴¹ Silz, 'Grillparzer's Ottokar', p. 260.

⁴² Hoffmann, 'König Ottokar', pp. 193-202.

⁴³ See Introduction, pp. 17-18.

becomes apparent in Act V as sounds from the battlefield impinge on Ottokar's prayer before Margarethe's coffin (*DKV*, II: 496-497). Ottokar accepts his public responsibility to an extent, as he remarks, 'es ist mein Land, | Das in mir Ehen schließt und Ehen scheidet' (*DKV*, II: 414). Kubitschek perceives his ambitions as more patriotic than personal.⁴⁴ Yet Ottokar does not recognise the implications of his 'private' choices, which contribute to his failure to gain the title of Holy Roman Emperor. Grillparzer attests to a new demand for openness in politics in which the public world constantly threatens to invade and disrupt the private.

The fusion of political and sexual motives in Ottokar's demise is further evidence of Grillparzer's breaking down of boundaries between public and private spheres. Gerlach rejects the arguments of Silz and Steinhagen, who, he claims, focus too exclusively on politics and are misled into thinking Ottokar has been crippled by the end of Act III, as symbolised by his act of kneeling before Rudolf.⁴⁵ Gerlach and Lorenz highlight the importance of female figures for Grillparzer: in *König Ottokar*, dysfunctional marital relationships play a key role in the progress of the action.⁴⁶ Ottokar must submit in Act III to Rudolf and relinquish certain territories but he is not at his 'end'. This set back becomes complete defeat only after Kunigunde's rebuke in Act IV provokes him to tear up his agreement with Rudolf. Ottokar's decline is registered on two occasions in Act III, when his demand for his wife's presence becomes a plea as she refuses to comply. Ultimately, he

⁴⁴ Kubitschek, "'O Gott, wo find' ich Menschen?'" , p. 166.

⁴⁵ Gerlach, 'Die doppelte Peripetie', p. 43.

⁴⁶ Dagmar C. G. Lorenz, 'Frau und Weiblichkeit bei Grillparzer', in *Der Widerspenstigen Zähmung: Studien zur bezwungenen Weiblichkeit in der Literatur vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. by Sylvia Wallinger and Monika Jonas (Innsbruck: Institut für Germanistik der Universität Innsbruck, 1986), p. 201. Walter Weiss argues, as does Lorenz, that Grillparzer identified more closely with his female figures and more generally with the 'oppressed' in his dramas: see Walter Weiss, 'Opfer bei Grillparzer', *Études Germaniques*, 47 (1992), 235-243 (p. 238).

must accept defeat (*DKV*, II: 488). Ottokar has become a victim of the ‘*sexuelle Hörigkeit*’ of an older man anxious to recapture the virility of his youth, which is embodied by Zawisch.⁴⁷

Ottokar fails to establish authority in the private sphere, just as his authority begins to dwindle on the political stage. He is not ‘Herr in seinem Haus’,⁴⁸ as confirmed by Kunigunde’s ability to provoke her husband to take military action as a result of her reproach ‘An Eurem Sarge will ich lieber stehn, | Als mit Euch liegen, zugedeckt von Schande!’ (*DKV*, II: 484). Kunigunde’s rejection destroys Ottokar as a man when previously he was hurt only as a monarch. He cedes ethical autonomy to Kunigunde, which is symptomatic of wider failings in the execution of his public office. *König Ottokar* confirms that no man has the credentials to rule a country if he does not command the respect of those closest to him.⁴⁹ Throughout *König Ottokar*, Grillparzer engages with conventional gender roles and questions them. Ottokar fails to fulfil the standards expected of a man in his unethical treatment of Margarethe and his failure to withstand the promptings of Kunigunde to act unethically. By contrast, Grillparzer’s portrayals of the heroic Margarethe and bold Kunigunde challenge any suggestion of female weakness.

In *König Ottokar*, Grillparzer depicts a new political reality in which the main actors are deprived of a private existence and must contend with an array of new pressures. Roe argues that in his treatment of the motives underlying Ottokar’s actions and his creation of ambivalent figures and complex subplots Grillparzer shows that he has left behind the greater certainty of the writers of the classical generation and anticipates, if only in

⁴⁷ Reeve, ‘Bitten versus Befehlen’, p. 134.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

embryonic form, the complex psychology of the post-Freudian age.⁵⁰ Ward illustrates Grillparzer's multi-faceted presentation of Ottokar's downfall by exploring how subplots thematically 'reflect and refract' the main action.⁵¹ The intertwining of various threads of action emphasises the multitude of forces acting on Ottokar and accelerating his demise, not least the conspiring of the Rosenbergs and the Zawisch-Kunigunde relationship. The detrimental effect of the activity surrounding Ottokar is evident in the visibly increasing fragility of his psychological condition, exposed strikingly when the Kanzler announces Rudolf's election:

Als jener den Namen Habsburg nennt, fährt Ottokar zusammen; die Hand, mit der er auf den Brief zeigt, beginnt zu zittern; er stottert noch einige Worte: und der – muß fort! Die Hand mit dem Briefe sinkt herab; mit gebrochenen Knieen steht er noch eine Sekunde, starr vor sich hinsehend, dann rafft er sich empor und geht starken Schrittes in sein Zimmer. (DKV, II: 440-441)

Through stagecraft Grillparzer highlights Ottokar's blindness: he is the last to learn of his defeat. Ottokar is deeply shaken, yet attempts to hide his shock and lost confidence behind fierce defiance. He cannot sustain this defiance after his political and sexual humiliation by Rudolf and Kunigunde respectively, both of which arise from Zawisch's scheming. Zawisch is of key importance to the disintegration of private and public boundaries. Zawisch represents a character type absent from the classical plays of Goethe and Schiller; he is a mixture of cheek and subservience reminiscent of eighteenth-century Viennese comedies.⁵² Treacherous and cunning, he pursues his own interests and plays a significant role in Ottokar's demise.⁵³

⁵⁰ Roe, *Major Works*, p. 114.

⁵¹ Ward, 'Reflections and Refractions', pp. 209-224.

⁵² Roe, *Major Works*, p. 114.

⁵³ *Ibid.*; and Hoffmann, 'König Ottokar', p. 193.

The primary concern of Grillparzer's historical dramas, according to Lorenz, is the portrayal of human beings performing stately functions. She concludes that the role of absolute monarch places an impossible burden on the individual and leads inevitably to corruption, as too much power and responsibility rests with one figure.⁵⁴ For Lorenz, *König Ottokar* documents the dawning of a new age: Ottokar and Rudolf are representatives of old and new systems. The Napoleonic 'great man' is replaced by the new 'professionelle Kaiser'.⁵⁵ Schaum's elucidation of this transition as one from Ottokar's outdated 'Popanz mit dem blankem Schwert',⁵⁶ to Rudolf, the people's emperor, is more persuasive. Grillparzer was keenly aware of the upheaval underway in the nineteenth century and hoped Rudolf's declaration: 'Wir stehen am Eingang einer neuen Zeit' (*DKV*, II: 466), would find resonance with nineteenth-century audiences. *König Ottokar* is no patriotic dramatization of Habsburg dominion, but rather a staging of 'die Wirkung des Zeitgeists'.⁵⁷ Rudolf's treatment of Otto von Horneck is significant. Rudolf values and rewards the independent writer and does not try to censor or restrain him (*DKV*, II: 458-459). Grillparzer is reflecting on the task of writing about Habsburg history and proposes an ideal model for the relationship between writer and state, which differs radically from the repressive conditions in which he was writing in the nineteenth century.

Robert Mühlher shares the view that Grillparzer believed 'eine Zeit des Volkes' had arrived, a fact the nineteenth-century Habsburg government refused to acknowledge.⁵⁸ This does not mean that Grillparzer was proposing the abolition of monarchical rule or the

⁵⁴ Lorenz, *Dichter des sozialen Konflikts*, p. 123.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ This remark by Hebbel is cited in Konrad Schaum, *Grillparzer-Studien* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2001), p. 38.

⁵⁷ Schaum, *Grillparzer-Studien*, p. 39.

⁵⁸ Robert Mühlher, 'Grillparzer-Metternich-Napoleon', *JbGG*, 17 (1991), 1-14, (p. 5).

introduction of a democratic system. Grillparzer recognised that normal people were becoming more engaged in politics and that a shift was taking place in the type of leader deemed acceptable in post-Napoleonic Europe. Grillparzer evokes the 'enlightened' values and humanitarian, moderate government that he associated with Joseph II, which Grillparzer felt were needed to recover from the devastating Napoleonic wars. Grillparzer expressed a critical view of the individual 'great man' in poems and dramas, yet there is also regret in his enthusiastic portrayal of the passionate, psychologically complex Ottokar. In his poem 'Napoleon' (1821), Grillparzer expressed the dilemma of the age: 'Die Welt hat nichts mit Großem mehr zu schaffen' (GW, I: 89). This is echoed in Rudolf's words:

Der Jugendtraum der Erde ist geträumt,
Und mit den Riesen, mit den Drachen ist
Der Helden, der Gewaltgen Zeit dahin. (DKV, II: 466)

Grillparzer's leaders stand on opposite sides of a political shift. Criticism is detectable in the discrepancy between the authenticity of ethical standards propounded by Rudolf I and the repressive policies of the nineteenth-century Habsburg government. Rudolf I, the brave Margarethe and the loyal Kanzler provide models of moral legitimacy, against which the government of Grillparzer's age is exposed as inadequate.

EIN TREUER DIENER SEINES HERRN

Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn is arguably Grillparzer's most controversial drama. Initially viewed with incomprehension and scepticism, it was the only play amongst Grillparzer's first seven not to be featured in the reliefs on the monument in the Vienna Volksgarten.¹

Described by Klarmann in 1975 as the most misunderstood Grillparzer drama, *Ein treuer Diener* has been viewed as the dramatist's most 'insipidly loyal' and 'forgettable' drama, as well as his most critically engaged in socio-political events of the age and his most original creation.² Late nineteenth-century commentators criticised the protagonist Bancbanus's supposedly weak, subservient nature, deeming him un-tragic, even comic.³ *Ein treuer Diener* was interpreted as another unequivocal celebration of the 'Habsburg Mythos', a reading that continues to resonate with scholars. Brigitte Prutti argues that the drama legitimises the conservative vision of the Metternich era in its defence of the 'peaceful' status quo.⁴ Nevertheless, over recent decades the drama has gradually been recognised for its subversive tendencies and linguistic innovations.⁵ Heinz Politzer's approach, focusing on

¹ The sculpture in commemoration of the deceased poet's literary achievements was completed by Rudolph Weyr, Karl Kundmann and Karl Hasenauer in 1889. See Ian F. Roe, *Franz Grillparzer: A Century of Criticism* (Columbia: Camden House, 1995), p. 88.

² Armin Gebhardt, *Franz Grillparzer und sein dramatisches Werk* (Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 2002), pp. 79-85; and Ian F. Roe, *An Introduction to the Major Works of Franz Grillparzer, 1791 – 1872, Austrian Dramatist* (New York: Mellen, 1991), p. 120.

³ Wilhelm Scherer, 'Franz Grillparzer: Beiträge zu seinem Verständnis', in Scherer, *Vorträge und Aufsätze zur Geschichte des geistigen Lebens in Deutschland und Österreich* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1874); Johannes Volkelt, *Grillparzer als Dichter des Tragischen* (Nördlingen: Beck, 1888); and August Sauer, 'Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn', *JbGG*, 3 (1893), 1-40; cited by Roe, *Century of Criticism*, pp. 88-90.

⁴ Brigitte Prutti, 'Funny Games: Semiotischer Sündenfall und ästhetische Restauration in Grillparzers Trauerspiel: *Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn*', *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 81 (2007), 369-404 (pp. 369-371).

⁵ Roe, *Century of Criticism*, p. 88.

psychological complexities, has inspired a tradition of scholars who celebrate *Ein treuer Diener* as a work that repays close attention.⁶

This chapter challenges commentators who interpret *Ein treuer Diener* as an unambiguous paean of praise and a statement of unconditional loyalty to the Habsburg government. Investigation of the presentation of leadership figures and consideration of themes such as the interplay of private and public domains, duty and justice, casts light on various complexities. Political implications shall also be considered. *Ein treuer Diener* demonstrates Grillparzer's anti-revolutionary stance and his belief in the importance of order and stability for humanitarian values. Yet Grillparzer also illustrates the dangers of absolute monarchy and of blind devotion to a flawed system, as they allow irresponsible leadership and exploitation of law-abiding citizens. Central to the drama is a need for balance and moderation to protect the most sacred human values. The significance of humanitarian values, ideals of justice, self-control, laws and humanity, recall key ideas of Weimar Classicism. Yet Roe stresses that *Ein treuer Diener* marks a turning point in Grillparzer's dramatic style, particularly with regards to language and the use of theatrical effects. Grillparzer departs from what Roe perceives as previous dependence on classical models to develop an individual style, in which he raises serious doubts over the very meaning of 'Recht' and problematises the application of eighteenth-century philosophical ideals to a chaotic real world.⁷

The material that inspired Grillparzer's *Ein treuer Diener* came to his attention in 1815.

Grillparzer was captivated by the figure of Queen Gertrude in Josef von Hormayr's

⁶ Heinz Politzer, 'Verwirrung des Gefühls: Franz Grillparzers *Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn*', *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 39 (1965), 58-86 (p. 58).

⁷ Roe, *Major Works*, pp. 136-137.

Österreichischer Plutarch (1807-1820). He felt the murder of a queen would be a potent subject for drama. Grillparzer's main source was J. A. Fessler's *Die Geschichten der Ungarn und ihrer Landsassen* (1815).⁸ He returned to this material by request of Karoline Auguste, who was crowned queen of Hungary on 25 September 1825. Grillparzer received an invitation through the queen's chief minister, Duke Dietrichstein, to write a play for her coronation. Grillparzer declined the offer, claiming he could not find a suitable topic: he felt revolt and regicide were unsuitable subjects for the occasion (*SB*: 198-199). Despite declining the commission, Grillparzer continued to develop the material and began writing *Ein treuer Diener* in March 1826, completing it within five weeks of his return from Germany. Grillparzer claimed he developed this material to avoid further difficulties with the censor (*SB*: 198). He was confident no problems would arise from publishing what he described years later as 'diese[s] bis zum Übermaß loyalen Stück[e]' (*SB*: 202). Despite this claim, it could be no coincidence that this material provided ample opportunity to explore critically themes strikingly relevant to the nineteenth century such as revolution, the burden of public duty and questionable leadership.

Ein treuer Diener is based on a story from twelfth-century Hungary that is part-legend and part-history. In Grillparzer's source, Bancbanus is proclaimed regent whilst the king is away, only for the seduction of his wife to lead to a riot in which the queen is killed. The king's supporters restore order and kill all the rebels except Bancbanus.⁹ Grillparzer made significant changes. Otto von Meran, the queen's brother, fails to seduce Bancbanus's wife Erny: she commits suicide to escape his advances. Bancbanus's family assumes Otto has

⁸ For a fuller discussion of the genesis of *Ein treuer Diener*, see Helmut Bachmaier's commentary in *DKV*, II: 903.

⁹ Roe, *Major Works*, p. 121.

murdered her and instigates revolt. Bancbanus opposes the rebels and helps the queen, Otto and the king's young heir Bela to escape. Queen Gertrude, mistaken for her brother, is killed as she flees. On his return, the king spares the rebels and commends Bancbanus's service. Grillparzer also added themes not to be found in his source material, namely the age gap between Bancbanus and his young wife, and Bancbanus's unsuitability for the role of co-regent.¹⁰ Grillparzer's modifications emphasise the protagonist's loyalty, which accords with the bewilderment Grillparzer voiced in his *Selbstbiographie* at the emperor's reservations about this supposedly loyal play. Yet the drama clearly has subversive implications, which made it advisable for Grillparzer to reject the charge of subversion.

The stage production of *Ein treuer Diener* was, initially at least, a great success, as Grillparzer documented in a diary entry from 28 February 1828 (*GW*, XV: 140). He recalled the first performance in his *Selbstbiographie*:

Das Stück erfuhr gar keine Hindernisse von Seite der Zensur und wurde, ohne daß fast ein Wort gestrichen worden wäre, mit ungeheuerem Beifall aufgeführt. [...] Der Beifall wollte nicht enden (*SB*: 200)

The following day, Grillparzer was summoned by the police chief, Sedlnitzky, who told him of Francis I's wish to buy exclusive rights to the play. In a letter presented to Sedlnitzky, Grillparzer explained the financial dilemma this step would pose for him (*GW*, XVI: 84-85). He also highlighted that the play had already been sent to various theatres and thus it would be impossible to restrict access to the script to the emperor's private library. Grillparzer expressed foreboding at this development in a diary entry of 5 March 1828. The ironic tone with which Grillparzer reports Sedlnitzky's words stresses his cynicism towards the mighty and impersonal political machinery that hindered his literary expression:

¹⁰ Ibid.

Sie hätten sich mit väterlicher Güte über mich und mein Stück geäußert, das Ihnen sehr gefallen; aber Ihr [Francis I's] *Wunsch* bleibe derselbe. [...] Das ist die mildeste Tyrannei von der ich noch gehört! [...] Die unsichtbaren Ketten klirren an Hand und Fuß. Ich muß meinem Vaterlande Lebewohl sagen, oder die Hoffnung auf immer aufgeben, einen Platz unter den Dichtern meiner Zeit einzunehmen. (GW, XV: 141)

Emphasis on the word 'Wunsch' stresses Sedlnitzky's subtle coercion in reporting the emperor's words, an indicator of the political forces, of which Grillparzer was a victim.

Though the censor could not justify withholding the drama, there remained elements which the government deemed subversive and potentially dangerous.

A central aspect that may have provoked the emperor's officials to recommend the purchase of the play, with the intention of restricting its public circulation, is the largely unflattering portrayal of leadership figures. Act I deals primarily with King Andreas's declaration that he is departing for war and leaving his wife, Gertrude, in control of his kingdom with the aid of his loyal servant Bancbanus (DKV, II: 522). This act points to the culpability and fallibility of the monarch and the unsuitability of Gertrude and Bancbanus to rule in the king's absence. In the first scene, Grillparzer confronts the audience with the tensions central to Bancbanus's character. By ignoring taunts directed against himself and his wife from outside his home, Bancbanus appears tolerant, peaceful and practical. He rebuffs his enraged servant, 'Bist du so kriegerisch? | [...] Hier wohnt der Frieden' (DKV, II: 514). Yet he appears irrational in his refusal to accept his servant's claim that the king's brother-in-law, Otto, is amongst the rabble:

BANCBANUS. *mit halb gezücktem Säbel*: Gesehen, Schuft?
Hätt ichs gesehn mit diesen meinen Augen,
Weit eher glaubt ich, daß ich wachend träume,
Als Übles von dem Schwager meines Herrn! (DKV, II: 515)

The stage directions reveal Bancbanus's readiness to resort to violence in private in order to maintain public peace. Herbert Reichert emphasises Grillparzer's fusion of opposites in Bancbanus: strength with weakness. Grillparzer creates a complex and realistic hero, a union of stoicism and physical weakness.¹¹ Contradictory characterisation directs the audience to share Bancbanus's reservations about his suitability as co-regent (*DKV*, II: 528). It is significant that the first scene shows external forces pressing in on the protagonist's home. It seems there is no escape from public opinion or responsibility.

In contrast, the queen's brother Otto openly rebels against his public responsibility as a member of the royal family. A diary entry dated 20 March 1826 reveals Grillparzer's view of Otto: 'Dieser Libertin, der seine Leidenschaften als Spielzeug braucht, bei dem sie aber zugleich so heftig sind, daß sie wieder zur Wahrheit werden und ihn im 3. Akte körperlich krank machen' (*GW*, XV: 116). Grillparzer felt the success of the drama rested on the credibility of this portrait: exchanges between Otto and Erny were drafted several times.¹² The episode outside Bancbanus's house in the first scene exposes Otto as a troublemaker, his arrogance expressed in his disregard for the law:

Ich lache dieser Tröpfe!
Ist meine Schwester Königin im Land,
Daß ich viel fragen soll nach Brauch und Sitte? (*DKV*, II: 520)

As the queen's brother, Otto considers himself exempt from moral concerns. Private misbehaviour becomes his public face and begins to drive the political action. His descent into what Lorenz considers 'temporary madness' in response to Erny's rebuke, an episode

¹¹ Herbert W. Reichert, 'The Characterization of Bancbanus in Grillparzer's *Ein Treuer Diener seines Herrn*', *Studies in Philology*, 46 (1949), 70-78 (p. 74).

¹² Grillparzer was primarily dissatisfied with the scene when Otto confronts Erny about her theft of a lock of his hair (*DKV*, II: 558-9). For more detail see Politzer, 'Verwirrung der Gefühls', pp. 66-70.

comparable to Ottokar's crisis in Act IV of *König Ottokar* on hearing of Rudolf's election, scares Gertrude into indulging her brother and engineering a meeting with his object of desire.¹³ Physical entrapment leads to Erny's suicide. This private incident, unseen by most characters, leads to regicide and civil war.

Otto's egoistic attitude also reveals Gertrude's weakness, namely her blind devotion to her brother, as she appeals to her husband to name Otto as co-regent despite his evident unsuitability (*DKV*, II: 523). Caroline Anders explores the disparity between the self-restraining behaviour of Hungarian figures and the aggressive and self-serving nature of royals of German descent such as Gertrude and Otto, whom Anders defines as the 'Westerners'.¹⁴ For Anders, the drama is structured around the frontier separating two camps, 'Hungarians' and 'Westerners', a boundary the 'western' duo breaches.¹⁵ In retrospect, Grillparzer admitted that an element of the Hungarian 'alter Abneigung gegen die Deutschen' emerges in the central conflict of the play (*SB*: 199). Nevertheless, Grillparzer did not intend to mount an attack on Germans or any specific group; rather he criticises the values these characters represent within the play. Joachim Müller agrees that two opposing value systems are pitted against one another and struggle for primacy,¹⁶ just as two leadership models struggled for power in *König Ottokar*.

There are various examples in *Ein treuer Diener* of how personal relationships threaten political stability. This danger is clear from the outset as Gertrude abuses her relationship

¹³ Dagmar C. G. Lorenz, *Grillparzer: Dichter des sozialen Konflikts* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1986), p. 122.

¹⁴ Caroline Anders, "... der Zündstoff liegt, der diese Mine donnernd sprengt gen Himmel": *Strategien der Ordnungsdestruktion in Franz Grillparzers dramatischem Werk* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2008), pp. 69-91.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Joachim Müller, 'Spiel- und Sprachebenen in Grillparzers Trauerspiel *Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn*', *JbGG*, 12 (1976), 205-233 (pp. 205-209).

with Andreas to manipulate her husband into placing the stability of his kingdom in her hands. Her appeals for Otto reveal her own ambitions behind the pretence of advancement for her sibling:

Ich grollte stets, daß ich ein Mädchen war,
Ein Knabe wünscht ich mir zu sein – wie Otto. [...]
Er ist mein Ich, er ist der Mann Gertrude,
Ich bitt Euch, trennt mich nicht von meinem Selbst! (*DKV*, II: 525)

This passage reveals Gertrude's feelings towards her brother: jealousy, passion, even idolisation. She watched with envy as Otto's gender allowed him to surpass her privately and publicly, in his role within the family and society. Politzer scrutinises Gertrude's intricate psychological make-up and elaborates on what he considers her confused gender self-image. Gertrude wishes to escape her gender, which she sees as a limitation to overcome. Politzer perceives Gertrude's adoration of Otto as bordering on incestuous attraction.¹⁷ More plausible is that Gertrude sees Otto as a means of accessing and experiencing a male-dominated world. She uses both her public and private roles as wife and co-regent to extend her brother's power. Grillparzer conveys the folly of Gertrude's drive for self-advancement when in Act IV, whilst fleeing from the castle, she takes up her brother's abandoned cloak and sword intending to fight in his stead (*DKV*, II: 578-579). As the weight of these items alone defeats her, she must realise that greed for power has diverted her from fulfilling her duty as queen.

Private passions continually disrupt public affairs, for example the complex interaction between Otto and Erny. Prutti emphasises the importance of props and visual effects in the construction of relationships between characters, testifying to the influence of Viennese

¹⁷ Politzer, 'Verwirrung des Gefühls', pp. 70-71.

popular theatre on Grillparzer. Erny's lingering stare directed at Otto, her theft of a lock of his hair and the unwritten note that burns her chest (*DKV*, II: 544): these 'private' incidents contribute to the escalation of events leading to civil war.¹⁸ Anders documents the intensification of Gertrude's behaviour: she becomes increasingly aggressive as her campaign fails to achieve the desired result, just as Otto grows more hostile as Erny rejects his advances and voices her 'Verachtung' (*DKV*, II: 548).¹⁹ Private passions repeatedly impact upon public affairs and cause ruptures.

Andreas nearly submits to Gertrude's wish to declare Otto co-regent and only rejects this idea when the count arrives late to his summons. This confirms the influence of private relationships on the business of government and leads the audience to question the king's judgement and ability as ruler. His claim that Gertrude is 'gerecht und klug' (*DKV*, II: 529) is clearly inaccurate, as illustrated when Gertrude publicly reveals her anger at his decision to appoint Bancbanus, tearing up her handkerchief and refusing to allow Bancbanus to kiss her hand (*DKV*, II: 527-528). The task Andreas gives Bancbanus reveals further lack of insight:

Wie vorwärts nicht, so rückwärts nicht gefußt!
Denn was du darfst, ist dem gleich was du mußt. [...]
Als ich dich wählte, dacht ich Ruhe mir,
In Feld und Stadt, in Schloß und Hütten Ruhe.
Die fordr' ich nun von dir. [...] (*DKV*, II: 528-529)

As Roe notes, this passage highlights resemblance between the form of *Ein treuer Diener* and seventeenth-century Baroque theatre, in which a task is set by a figure representing royal or divine authority who returns at the end to assess the fulfilment of said task.²⁰ This framework structured around the omniscient, infallible authority figure is undermined by

¹⁸ Prutti, 'Semiotischer Sündenfall', pp. 380-389.

¹⁹ Anders, *Strategien der Ordnungsdestruktion*, pp. 75-78.

²⁰ Roe, *Major Works*, p. 134.

Andreas's apparent incompetence. The kingdom is by no means in a state of 'fromme Ruhe' (DKV, II: 529). Tensions threaten to drive the country towards chaos, not least Gertrude's antagonism towards her co-regent. Lorenz questions Andreas's decision to depart for war. He claims 'es drängt die Pflicht' (DKV, II: 522), yet no detail as to the nature of this conflict is provided. Lorenz suggests this is simply a pretext to escape impending crisis at home. Andreas leaves Bancbanus with the impossible task of averting disaster: he is a scapegoat.²¹ The king is acutely aware of the threat Otto poses to stability. When Gertrude inquires as to what her brother lacks, he retorts 'Sitte!' (DKV, II: 524). Yet he does nothing to address this danger, instead leaving Bancbanus, a self-professed 'schwacher Mann' (DKV, II: 528), to contend with a resentful queen and volatile court.

Whilst Grillparzer highlights various weaknesses in Gertrude and Andreas, scholars remain divided over whether Bancbanus provides a more suitable leadership model. Politzer highlights Bancbanus's psychological intricacies, yet argues that he lacks the qualities needed for a tragic hero.²² Grillparzer defended Bancbanus in his *Selbstbiographie*:

Man hat dem Stücke vorgeworfen, daß es eine Apologie der knechtischen Unterwürfigkeit sei; ich hatte dabei den Heroismus der Pflichttreue im Sinn, der ein Heroismus ist so gut als jeder andere. Im französische Revolutionskriege ist die Aufopferung der Vendeer so erhehend als die Begeisterung der Republikaner. Bancbanus hat dem Könige sein Wort gegeben die Ruhe der Lande aufrecht zu erhalten, und er hält sein Wort, trotz allem was den Menschen in ihm wankend machen und erschüttern sollte. Seine Gesinnungen können übrigens nicht für die des Verfassers gelten, da Bancbanus bei allen seinen Charakter-Vorzügen zugleich als ein ziemlich bornierter alter Mann geschildert ist. (SB: 200)

Grillparzer disassociates himself from his protagonist, yet gives moral equivalence to revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries, acknowledging aspects of greatness in both.

²¹ Lorenz, *Dichter des sozialen Konflikts*, pp. 154-156.

²² Politzer, 'Verwirrung des Gefühls', p. 58.

Grillparzer was writing retrospectively in changed political circumstances and with knowledge of criticism directed at the play.²³ Therefore, his comments could be seen as a considered defence and justification of his hero. Nevertheless, this passage stresses key features of Bancbanus's composition. He is no traditional 'great man'. He resists involvement in revolutionary action when revolt may be justified, yet stays true to his charge, and this commitment to order, for Grillparzer, is heroic.

Lorenz considers Bancbanus Grillparzer's most positive hero. She rightly notes that as a former servant, he lacks the authority to control the queen and her brother and therefore struggles to fulfil the role of co-regent effectively. Nevertheless, he is tolerant, rational and unequivocally loyal.²⁴ Prutti supports Richard Alewyn's claim that Bancbanus's unwavering devotion to the royal house is a demonstration of his representative function as a pillar of the *ancien régime*.²⁵ On the contrary, Lorenz views Bancbanus as a progressive figure, as exemplified in his relationship with Erny.²⁶ This, she argues, is the only positive marriage portrayed by Grillparzer. Bancbanus is everything to Erny, as conveyed by her exclamation: 'Mann! Gatte! Vater!' (DKV, II: 545).²⁷ Lorenz commends Bancbanus's liberal attitude towards his wife. He encourages her to be independent and self-confident: she is his equal not his possession.²⁸ This argument overlooks Bancbanus's frequent reference to his wife as 'Kind', which implies a paternalistic attitude. Grillparzer implies that Erny needs and desires marital protection, as she despairs in Act II, 'Und lässest du mich so allein? Bancbanus, |

²³ For more detail on political changes underway in the nineteenth century see Introduction, Section 1.

²⁴ Lorenz, *Dichter des sozialen Konflikts*, p. 158.

²⁵ Prutti, 'Semiotischer Sündenfall', p. 371. See also Richard Alewyn, 'Grillparzer und die Restauration', in *Probleme und Gestalten. Essays* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1974), pp. 281-298 (p. 282).

²⁶ Lorenz, *Dichter des sozialen Konflikts*, pp. 156-158.

²⁷ Müller, 'Spiel- und Sprachebenen in Grillparzers Trauerspiel', p. 210.

²⁸ Lorenz, *Dichter des sozialen Konflikts*, p. 157.

Willst du dein Weib nicht strafen und nicht hüten?' (*DKV*, II: 545). Bancbanus's uncomprehending response that she should depend on her female honour provokes anguish. Roe recognises Bancbanus's inability to protect Erny, whose dying father left her in his care (*DKV*, II: 546). Bancbanus fails her as a father figure and husband.²⁹

Bancbanus sacrifices his private existence, manifested by Erny, in favour of public service. The tension between public and private spheres is apparent when he reproaches his wife for her plea that he abandon his public office:

Was fällt dir ein? Weil du nicht gern beim Fest,
Soll ich von Hof; Unfrieden herrschen lassen,
Verwirrung rings im Land? (*DKV*, II: 539)

Bancbanus will not be diverted from his duty, yet his determination to preserve peace blinds him to other potential dangers. His pedantic dedication to the task of government verges on the ridiculous in Act II Scene I when he becomes so immersed in searching for documents that he does not notice the queen has dissolved the meeting and is publicly mocking him (*DKV*, II: 531). King Andreas defines morality as a balance between too little and too much (*DKV*, II: 524). Bancbanus fails to achieve the moderation essential for effective leadership. Moments of comic relief interspersed throughout the first three acts expose the influence of Viennese popular theatre and Shakespeare's style of historical drama, in which serious scenes are balanced with moments of comedy. An example is Gertrude's justification of Otto's immorality as a result of his upbringing at the French court (*DKV*, II: 524): this lampooning of supposed French frivolity would have provoked hilarity from nineteenth-

²⁹ Roe, *Major Works*, p. 124.

century Austrian audiences.³⁰ Light-hearted passages vanish in the last two acts, a shift signalled by Erny's suicide.

Despite his shortcomings, Anders maintains that Bancbanus is the only constant in a play beset with transformation and transgression. In the confrontation between the 'Hungarian zone' and the 'Western zone', Anders argues, Hungarian figures increasingly acquire the wild temperament of the 'western' imposters. Gertrude and Otto attempt not only to impose their value system and character traits, but to usurp power. Each move on the part of Erny and the rebels, Simon and Peter, which elevates their own concerns above those of the greater community, lead them further from Hungarian values of self-restraint, peace and stability, and closer to the aggressive egotism of the 'westerners'.³¹ Bancbanus alone controls his passions, not overwhelmed by anger and despair, even when he believes his wife has been murdered. Bancbanus remains true to his anti-revolutionary principles under the most difficult of circumstances. He acts 'gut und schlimm, wie's eben möglich war' (*DKV*, II: 593), and succeeds in re-establishing order. This demonstrates superior strength of character despite physical infirmity and emotional turmoil. Schaum argues: 'Nicht was Bancbanus ist, sondern was er unter den schwierigsten Voraussetzungen an Notwendigem leistet, entscheidet seinen Rang in der geschichtlichen Entwicklung'.³²

The enormity of Bancbanus's task is conveyed in Act IV when, supported by a servant, he confronts his rebellious relatives and collapses, unable to make himself heard as they crash their weapons together in defiance:

Gebt mir mein Schwert! – Mein Schwert! – Mein Schwert!

³⁰ For more detail on tensions between France and Austria see Introduction, Section 1.

³¹ Anders, *Strategien der Ordnungsdestruktion*, pp. 79-82.

³² Konrad Schaum, *Grillparzer-Studien* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2001), p. 40.

Er wendet sich wankend gegen seine Diener und sinkt endlich in ihren Armen zu Erde.
(DKV, II: 569)

Bancbanus appears a lonely and forlorn figure in the face of seemingly insurmountable opposition, as was the case at the beginning of Act II when Gertrude dissolved the official proceedings, deeming Bancbanus a fool (DKV, II: 531). In his attempts to fulfil his duty, Bancbanus is overwhelmed by resistance and dissent. Striking staging underlines this: a fusion of physical frailty and moral fortitude shows that, despite obstacles, Bancbanus remains dedicated to his task.

Bancbanus's struggle to maintain a language of moderation is highly significant. Grillparzer avoids long monologues and philosophical deliberations. Rather than following traditions of classical blank verse tragedy, Grillparzer implements short speeches and half-lines to unsettle the poetic flow. The depth of Bancbanus's despair at Erny's death is conveyed with subtle delicacy in the single line 'O Erny, o mein Kind, mein gutes, frommes Kind!' (DKV, II: 565). Silence replaces soliloquy, yet proves equally poignant. Roe proposes that Grillparzer aimed to balance the idealism of Weimar Classicism with down-to-earth elements of popular theatre in his merger of humanitarian values with a modern semantic style, conveying a sense of the drama's grounding in reality without overshadowing classical values.³³ This fusion is echoed in Bancbanus's language and attitude. Though distraught by Erny's death, he recognises the need to maintain stability and acts according to political necessity. Turmoil is evident in Bancbanus's interaction with Otto in Act V, as he vacillates between addressing him as 'ihr' and 'du', 'Herzog' and 'Mörder' (DKV, II: 582-583). He suspects Otto's guilt but the royal family, a primary symbol of order, must be protected.

³³ Roe, *Major Works*, p. 141.

Most figures do not behave with the same rational objectivity. Whilst fleeing the castle in Act IV, Gertrude insists that Otto be taken to safety before herself or her son (*DKV*, II: 578). In political terms, the priority should be to protect the heir and the queen, yet in this moment of crisis private instincts override political rationale. In contrast, Otto's instinct is for self-preservation as he declares, 'Ja, mich zuerst' (*ibid.*). Anders highlights frequent use of personal and possessive pronouns in the semantic style of those under 'western' influence. Otto's impulse to cultivate his interests outweighs consideration for the welfare of the wider community or the country's political future.³⁴ Grillparzer portrays Bancbanus's considered, rational approach as exceptional. A complex mix of human traits is presented, which stress irrationality as central to human action.³⁵

Ein treuer Diener is structured around opposition and contradiction, which is evident in the portrayal of characters, the confrontation of private and public domains and in the clash between contrasting value systems. Ehrhard saw the oppression of private existence in the drama as a warning against the danger of abandoning a peaceful life in search of greatness.³⁶ Schaum presents this as evidence of an existential necessity on the part of Grillparzer's characters, forced to leave an isolated, timeless existence and seek their true identity in a historically real situation.³⁷ As in *König Ottokar*, public and private realms constantly collide and impinge upon one another until it is impossible to distinguish between the two. This synthesis highlights Grillparzer's suggestion that the conduct of public figures in the 'private' sphere impacts directly on their ability as public officials. In *Ein treuer Diener*, the audience is

³⁴ Anders, *Strategien der Ordnungsdestruktion*, pp. 74-78.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

³⁶ August Ehrhard, *Franz Grillparzer: Sein Leben und seine Werke*, ed. by Moritz Necker (Munich: Beck, 1902); cited by Roe, *Century of Criticism*, p. 90.

³⁷ Schaum, *Grillparzer-Studien*, pp. 211-232.

repeatedly encouraged to question Andreas's suitability as monarch. His failure as a reliable judge of character in relation to Gertrude indicates his judgement concerning matters of state may be questionable. This is confirmed on his return in Act V when, rather than recognise his mistake in appointing Bancbanus, he compounds this by pronouncing him second in command, a role the protagonist declines, disillusioned by the burden of public office (*DKV*, II: 597). Anders stresses the king's role in causing the crisis: it was he who invited the 'western' influence in and failed to control it.³⁸ Disaster springs from within as well as from external forces, as Rudolf II declares in *Bruderzwist*: 'Aus eigenem Schoß ringt los der Barbar' (*DKV*, III: 424).

Throughout the play, Grillparzer reminds the audience of the inseparable nature of private and public existence. Through the deteriorating image of Bancbanus, Grillparzer suggests public service demands unreasonable sacrifice and undermines the rights of the individual. This is apparent in the presentation of contrasting definitions of 'Recht'. Bancbanus sees the monarch as responsible for dictating the law. He reproaches Simon: 'Bist du der Richter hier in diesem Land?' (*DKV*, II: 567). Bancbanus's appreciation of peace, stability and justice reflects classical principles. Simon, however, asserts a sense of personal justice. Allowing Otto to escape would be an affront to his rights as a Hungarian citizen:

Der Rache sei ihr Recht, dem Recht sei Rache! [...]
Ich zog das Schwert, weil man mir Recht verweigert. (*DKV*, II: 569/587)

Grillparzer problematises the contradiction between the rights of the individual and the individual's duty to serve the state. Bancbanus's solution is to adhere to his humanitarian

³⁸ Anders, *Strategien der Ordnungsdestruktion*, pp. 90-91.

instincts and place 'Recht' before 'Rache', public duty before private discontent.³⁹ His dedication to peace is symbolised by his desperate act of hiding Bela under his cloak amidst the fighting, making his person a last line of defence against the violence provoked by his brother-in-law's insurrection (*DKV*, II: 581).

Grillparzer portrays Bancbanus as a lonely figure in his devotion to public office. Even Erny fails in her public role as the co-regent's wife by refusing to return to the dance in Act II (*DKV*, II: 538). She becomes engrossed in her private battle with Otto. Her public criticism of the prince (*DKV*, II: 548), which Bancbanus warned against, carries dire consequences in both the public and private sphere. In a society that values the pursuit of personal interests over the 'common good', Lorenz is justified in her conviction that too much power is placed with one individual to champion the public cause.⁴⁰

Prutti interprets *Ein treuer Diener* as an affirmation of a rigidly conservative order, crystallised in the 'homosoziale Versöhnungsvision' of the final tableau.⁴¹ Female figures, which represent a threat to the survival of the patriarchal order, are sacrificed and stability is secured.⁴² Though the final scene suggests the return of monarchical control, the play is far from endorsing a male utopian vision. The stability that has supposedly been restored is fragile: a makeshift victory at most.⁴³ Furthermore, indignation regarding the treatment of female characters is evident. Lorenz convincingly argues that Grillparzer empathised with

³⁹ Jürgen Schröder, 'Der Tod macht gleich: Grillparzers Geschichtsdramen', in *Franz Grillparzer: Historie und Gegenwartigkeit*, ed. by Gerhard Neumann and Günter Schnitzler (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 1994), pp. 37-57 (p. 49).

⁴⁰ Lorenz, *Dichter des sozialen Konflikts*, pp. 158-161.

⁴¹ Prutti, 'Semiotischer Sündenfall', p. 373.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 393-403.

⁴³ Politzer, 'Verwirrung des Gefühls', p. 84.

the oppressed in his dramas: women, the poor and minority groups.⁴⁴ This is the case in *König Ottokar*, as exemplified by Grillparzer's sympathetic portrayal of Margarethe. It appears the sacrifice of women is symbolic of public figures' need to forfeit a private existence to best serve the state. Constant blurring of boundaries stresses that politics is not containable: 'pure politics' do not exist for Grillparzer.

Ein treuer Diener documents a crisis of 'public' and 'private' father figures. King Andreas fails to protect his citizens, just as Bancbanus cannot shield Erny, and Otto has no father to guide him. This crisis is encapsulated in Act V in the apparent confusion over Bela's paternity. Otto, whom Bancbanus has entrusted with the protection of the heir, returns to the stage in the final scene declaring, 'Bancban! Sie rauben mir dein Kind!' (*DKV*, II: 594). The monarch has returned, but a shift of moral power has taken place. Bancbanus has reasserted control and protected the citizens: he has assumed the role of public 'father'. The absence of legitimate fathers is symbolic of a moral vacuum, which Bancbanus fills, yet at the cost of his private obligations. The themes of fatherhood and legitimacy dominate *Bruderzwist* as the older generation fails to assert control, yet the young offer no source of alternative legitimacy.

Ein treuer Diener has an anti-revolutionary message, but it is not a paean of praise to absolutism. Otto did not kill Erny, thus Grillparzer demonstrates the folly of resorting hastily to violence and lawlessness. As reflected in Andreas's definition of morality, Grillparzer believed moderation should be fundamental to human activity. Grillparzer stresses that preserving justice and morality through a stable but imperfect system is preferable to

⁴⁴ Dagmar C. G. Lorenz, 'Franz Grillparzer und die alten und neuen Ordnungen', *Modern Austrian Literature*, 28 (1995), 29-41 (pp. 31-32).

anarchy. Nevertheless, there is a high degree of implied criticism in the drama, which acknowledges flaws in the state apparatus. As Roe remarks, 'if the play is loyal, then it is loyal to an ideal and future ruler who did not exist in the Austria of Grillparzer's day'.⁴⁵ *Ein treuer Diener* depicts an irresponsible royal house, which wrongly considers itself above the law. Grillparzer criticises a system that demands too much of individuals. By Act V, Bancbanus is a broken man. He retreats into solitude, disillusioned by public life, yet his private existence is in ruins (*DKV*, II: 596-597). The servant has the last words, with which he places hope for the future in the young heir (*DKV*, II: 598). Hope is detectable, yet sadness and criticism prevail over anticipation and renewal. As Schröder remarks: 'Der bürgerliche Traum von der baldigen Humanisierung der Geschichte ist ausgeträumt'.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Roe, *Century of Criticism*, p. 93.

⁴⁶ Schröder, 'Tod macht gleich', p. 50.

.3.

EIN BRUDERZWIST IN HABSBURG

RUDOLF. Ich hielt die Welt für klug, sie ist es nicht. (*DKV*, III: 461)

This declaration from the final scene of Act IV, in which the emperor collapses, never to return to the stage, articulates the height of Rudolf II's despair. Rudolf has watched his empire descend into chaos. The time for action has passed. He appears now, a powerless captive, retreating ever further into the depths of his own castle (*DKV*, III: 459). Rudolf's lost faith in humanity reflects the resignation and disillusionment, which pervades *Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg*, which is symptomatic of a shift in Grillparzer's outlook. His earlier historical dramas were directed by a desire to comment on the past to highlight problems and effect change in the present. In *Bruderzwist*, Grillparzer seems resigned to imminent, unavoidable disaster. He evokes the Thirty Years' War, a recognised symbol of trauma and conflict, in which different religions and German territories were at war with one another, to communicate the magnitude of the crisis he anticipates in the nineteenth century. Grillparzer consigns himself to the role of an onlooker, observing and reflecting upon the conflicting forces driving the Empire towards anarchy.

This chapter will discuss Grillparzer's intentions when writing this historical drama: his reasons for using this material, his main sources of inspiration and the impact of contemporary socio-political developments on the drama's composition. Grillparzer's depiction of the power struggle between conflicting leadership figures shall also be explored. In the house of Habsburg, private tensions become state divides and provoke civil war. Rudolf's attempts to retreat into a private realm and preserve inner peace and order only

exacerbate tensions, as others respond to the perceived power vacuum he creates.

Grillparzer demonstrates the extent to which the concept of 'Recht' has become distorted since the age of Weimar Classicism as figures impose their conflicting definitions of justice: the clear moral framework of *König Ottokar* has disintegrated. *Bruderzwist* documents the rise of a new political dynamic: the traditional order embodied by Rudolf is lost, replaced by a political reality in which there is no 'legitimate' authority, but a multitude of different forces vying for supremacy. *Bruderzwist* incorporates aesthetic and thematic elements reminiscent of classical tragedy, such as Schiller's *Wallenstein*, psychological insight typical of more modern drama and reflection on wider questions such as the unpredictability of human existence. Grillparzer depicts a world rich with contradiction and cultural diversity. This chapter explores how Grillparzer reflects on and engages with political and philosophical issues.

Grillparzer began work on *Bruderzwist* in the 1820s, a play hailed as his most powerful work, as well as his most pessimistic.¹ The first act was completed between 1825 and 1828, during which time the second was outlined in draft form and extensive notes made on key themes. With the exception of a brief period in 1839, in which revisions were made to acts I and II, Grillparzer did not return to the project until 1844. The following four years saw the completion of the play, though Grillparzer remained dissatisfied and continued to make adjustments after 1848.² This long period of gestation is significant, as Grillparzer was able to spend considerable time studying sources and observing socio-political developments of his

¹ Walter Naumann, *Grillparzer: Das dichterische Werk* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1956), p. 39; and Bruce Thompson, *Franz Grillparzer* (Boston: Twayne, 1981), p. 108.

² For a fuller discussion of the genesis of *Bruderzwist* see Helmut Bachmeier's commentary on the play in *DKV*, III: 752-754/816-823; and Ian F. Roe, *An Introduction to the Major Works of Franz Grillparzer, 1791-1872, Austrian Dramatist* (New York: Mellen, 1991), pp. 229-230.

age. The result was a drama that offered insight into the past, whilst resonating in Grillparzer's present through his engagement with political issues and his contribution to discussions regarding philosophies of history. As Walter Weiss remarks, Grillparzer was 'nicht einfach österreichischer Staatsdiener und Staatsdichter, sondern zugleich ein scharfer Beobachter und Kritiker des österreichischen Staates und seiner Repräsentanten'.³

The sporadic composition of *Bruderzwist* was due to a loss of confidence in Grillparzer after difficulties with the rigorous official censorship and lukewarm responses of audiences. The suspicion Grillparzer encountered from the censor when attempting to publish *König Ottokar* and *Ein treuer Diener* encouraged him to retreat to the safer ground of Greek legend and the subject of love.⁴ Yet he faced further disappointment when audiences reacted unfavourably to his next tragedy *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen* in 1831 (GW, XV: 157). Grillparzer felt plagued by criticism and misconceptions, yet had always acknowledged the validity of public responses, even when hostile (GW, XII: 48). He believed art produced without the corrective of a mass public was liable to become distorted and sterile.⁵ These developments further undermined Grillparzer's fragile self-esteem and resulted in his withdrawal from stage production after the failure of *Weh dem, der lügt!* (1838). Grillparzer's resolve to withhold his work from the public had not weakened by December 1848, when he wrote his will and demanded *Bruderzwist* be destroyed, though he later recanted, instead specifying that the play should not be performed during his lifetime.⁶

Bruderzwist was the first of the unpublished dramas to be performed after Grillparzer's

³ Walter Weiss, 'Opfer bei Grillparzer', *Études Germaniques*, 47 (1992), 235-243 (p. 241).

⁴ F. J. Lampert, *German Classical Drama: Theatre, Humanity and Nation 1750-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 185.

⁵ Michael Perraudin, *Literature, the Volk and the Revolution in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 2000), p. 160.

⁶ Roe, *Major Works*, p. 1.

death. The premiere at the Vienna Stadttheater in 1872, followed two weeks later by a production at the Burgtheater, was a notable success.⁷

A sense of chaos characterises *Bruderzwist* structurally and thematically, for example through the intertwining of several threads of action. This reflects Grillparzer's perception of the vast and unsettling socio-political changes underway in Europe over the period of the genesis of the play. The Habsburg government faced growing political opposition from territories within its borders such as Hungary and Italy, and from the German nationalist movement, which rapidly gained momentum. Metternich's response was to strengthen repressive measures, but this provoked further anger and dissent. Grillparzer showed liberal sympathies, yet as revolution loomed, he followed events with growing horror.⁸ Increasing apprehension in the wake of imminent crisis is apparent in *Bruderzwist* through the portrayal of the Habsburg Empire on the brink of the Thirty Years' War. This major trauma fragmented the German lands and shaped German relations with the Austrian Habsburgs for two centuries. The empire's subjects paid a huge price: Bohemia proper lost nearly half its 1.7 million inhabitants, whilst Moravia and Silesia lost a third of their pre-war populations due to wartime atrocities, epidemics and exactions.⁹ The far-reaching devastation remained engraved on collective memory. Kevin Cramer stresses the function of the Thirty Years' War for nineteenth-century writers, intent on conveying the disfiguring and potentially annihilating effects of war and revolution.¹⁰ Accounts of the Thirty Years' War were irrevocably linked with the growth of nationalism in nineteenth-century Europe. Protestant

⁷ Ibid., p. 230.

⁸ See Introduction, Section 1, pp. 2-15.

⁹ Charles W. Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1618-1815*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 49-52.

¹⁰ Kevin Cramer, *The Thirty Years' War and German Memory in the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), p. 180.

German historians identified the conflict as the defining moment in the creation of a unifying national history, setting the course for unification in 1871, whilst Catholics evoked the memory of unparalleled devastation to express dread at Protestant-Prussian rule.¹¹ Grillparzer alluded to the conflict to emphasise his conviction that nationalism threatened to provoke a crisis of similar proportions in his own day.

The focus of *Bruderzwist* is Rudolf II. Historically, Rudolf's reign as Holy Roman Emperor (1576-1612) was marked by over a decade of war with the Turks (1593-1606) and escalating tensions between Catholics and Protestants, culminating in the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War six years after Rudolf's death.¹² Rudolf's predecessor, Maximilian II, granted freedom of worship to the Protestant nobility and advocated reform in the Roman Catholic Church: he promoted peace through a policy of religious neutrality. Under Rudolf II, Catholic anti-reformists' power reached its height, championed by the emperor's cousin Ferdinand. Rudolf grew up at the orthodox Spanish court of the despot Philip II, where he observed the machinations of absolute monarchy first-hand.¹³ He did not share the Spanish king's tyrannical nature, yet he learned to be suspicious of those around him. Rudolf vacillated between extremes, from passivity to ferocious action: contemporaries knew him as the 'Sonderling auf der Prager Burg'.¹⁴ At an early stage of his reign, Rudolf effectively withdrew from the political stage, enabling his brother to assume power and influence. Rudolf was forced to cede territories to his brother as Mathias accumulated support from Hungary and

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 178-216.

¹² Roe, *Major Works*, p. 230.

¹³ Werner Schwan, 'Grillparzers *Bruderzwist in Habsburg*: Ein skeptischer Blick in die Geschichte', *Recherches Germaniques*, 16 (1986), 55-82 (p. 61).

¹⁴ See Bachmeier's commentary in *DKV*, III: 830.

the Bohemian Protestants by promising concessions.¹⁵ On his death, Rudolf retained little more than the ceremonial title of Holy Roman Emperor. After Rudolf's death, hostility between religious groups intensified. In May 1618, the forced eviction of Catholic governors from Prague Castle, the so-called Defenestration of Prague, provoked open conflict. Mathias only lived to see the first year of the Thirty Years' War, and was succeeded by Ferdinand in 1619.¹⁶

Grillparzer voiced reservations about the genre of historical drama when writing *König Ottokar*, deeming it 'durchaus nicht empfehlenswert' (SB: 151).¹⁷ He was frustrated in his attempts to master the form by the difficulty of achieving internal unity and dramatic immediacy. Grillparzer identified the problem in the unwieldy nature of historical material, which resisted the creation of the dramatic image as 'eine Gegenwart'.¹⁸ Schiller faced similar difficulties when writing *Wallenstein* (1798). Intent on achieving strict dramatic form, Schiller complained to Goethe in 1797 of how his material was swelling to epic proportions: the completed text comprised of a dramatic prelude and two five-act plays.¹⁹ Menhennet argues that Grillparzer shared this classical attachment to poetic form.²⁰ He came up against the 'epic' problem in his work on *Das goldene Vlies* (1821), at which point he was forced to implement what he termed the 'schlechte Form' of the trilogy.²¹ Grillparzer aimed to imbue *Bruderzwist* with a deeper sense of unity. He condensed the action to give the impression of

¹⁵ For more detail see Roe, *Major Works*, p. 230.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ For further detail see Mark Ward, 'Reflections and Refractions: An Aspect of the Structure of Grillparzer's *König Ottokars Glück und Ende*', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 25 (1989), 209-224 (pp. 210-212).

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 212.

¹⁹ Alan Menhennet, *The Historical Experience in German Drama: From Gryphius to Brecht* (Rochester: Camden House, 2003), p. 50.

²⁰ For more detail on Grillparzer's views about historical drama see SB: 149-152.

²¹ Ibid., p. 104.

a shorter timeframe. He telescoped events spanning twenty-two years from 1596, the year in which Mathias assumed command of the imperial army, until the start of the Thirty Years' War in 1618. Grillparzer engineered events so that Rudolf's death coincided with the outbreak of war, suggesting a greater causal link between Rudolf's policies and conflict.²² For Roe, Grillparzer's telescoping of historical background draws on Schiller's technique of concentration, implemented in *Wallenstein* and *Maria Stuart*, in which attention is focused on the latter stages of a complex development.²³ Reduction of the timeframe facilitated Grillparzer's study of humans under pressure: actions are undertaken with an intensified sense of urgency (SB: 150).

Though Grillparzer radically compressed the time-scale, he preserved the complexities integral to his material. Menhennet notes that the form of *Bruderzwist* reflects the diffuse nature of history.²⁴ This was intentional. Grillparzer complained of dramatic complications caused by numerous leadership contenders, yet did not cut any from the plot. *Bruderzwist* incorporates crowd scenes and represents all levels of society. Moreover, subplots such as the Don Cäsar intrigue have limited relevance to the central political action.²⁵ Grillparzer attempted to impose dramatic unity on diffuse, unwieldy history, to displace the problems of history into the aesthetic realm where resolution is possible, just as Rudolf II hoped in vain to contain divergent factions within a unified empire. *Bruderzwist's* complex structure reflects Grillparzer's resignation concerning the futility of unifying attempts, the same predicament he perceived facing the nineteenth-century Habsburg government.

²² Roe, *Major Works*, p. 231

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Menhennet, *Historical Experience*, p. 112.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 110-113; Dagmar C. G. Lorenz, *Grillparzer: Dichter des sozialen Konflikts* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1986), p. 130; and Roe, *Major Works*, p. 232.

The tone of Grillparzer's second Habsburg drama differs greatly from his first. This shift reveals the extent to which the social and political dynamic of the century had changed in the years between the completion of the plays. In *König Ottokar*, Grillparzer drew a clear distinction between the morally superior Rudolf I, whose private and public values were aligned, and Ottokar, whose lack of authenticity and immoral action brought defeat. In *Bruderzwist*, no one contender can claim moral superiority. The fixed moral guidelines – reminiscent of ideals of Weimar Classicism – that were dominant in *König Ottokar*, have become distorted, authenticity replaced by political strategy. Impending chaos looms over the action as characters struggle with the impossibility of reconciling modern pluralism in a single, unified order. This dilemma thematically reflects the challenge faced by the Habsburg government in the mid-nineteenth century of controlling and containing national groups, whilst protecting the multinational structure of the empire.

As Hugo Schmidt remarks, *Bruderzwist* 'is elusive, and its impact is in its atmosphere'.²⁶

Fear and confusion are expressed at the beginning of Act II by a fleeing flag-bearer:

Sagt erst: wo ist der Feind, ob vor ob rückwärts?
Ein Krieger ficht wohl, weiß er gegen wen,
Doch wo nicht Ordnung, Kundschaft und Befehl,
Wehrt er sich seiner Haut und weiter nichts.
[...] Ein Führer erst! – Dann folgen Alle. (*DKV*, II: 396-397)

The captain's response, 'So bin ich unter Meutern?' (*ibid.*) underlines the inability of authority figures to take effective action: the captain's reaction is accusatory, but it does not acknowledge or tackle the soldiers' predicament. The army, like the empire, is leaderless: both the result of a divided ruling house. Various potential rulers are presented, yet all

²⁶ Hugo Schmidt, 'Realms of Action in Grillparzer's *Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg*', in *Studies in the German Drama: Festschrift in Honor of Walter Silz*, ed. by Donald H. Crosby and George C. Schoolfield (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 1974), p. 149.

appear unsuitable for the task of effective leadership. There is an overwhelming sense from the outset that a definitive figure of law and order is lacking, as expressed in the first lines:

GERICHTSPERSON. Im Namen kaiserlicher Majestät
Ruf' ich euch zu: Laßt ab!
DON CÄSAR. Ich nicht, fürwahr! (*DKV*, III: 375)

An anonymous figure speaks with royal authority, yet this authority is immediately challenged and rejected by none other than the emperor's illegitimate child, highlighting the thematic link between paternity and legitimacy. Don Cäsar challenges the authority of the 'Richter', and therefore the emperor himself. Claims of legitimacy are questioned throughout, implying a legitimate authority is lacking and alluding to the potential hollowness of Habsburg claims to legitimacy in Grillparzer's own day.²⁷ The established order is disintegrating; repeated calls for a 'Richter' are not heeded (*DKV*, III: 450/453). A power vacuum exists around Rudolf: the closer each individual gets to the empire's power centre, the more they aspire to claim power.²⁸

Studies of *Bruderzwist* tend to focus on the characterisation of 'der stille Kaiser Rudolf' (*GW*, XIV: 125). Scholarly debates highlight the ambivalence of Rudolf, both his strengths and weaknesses in comparison with others. Lorenz and Schröder consider the emperor the only ray of hope in the drama.²⁹ Gerhart Baumann perceives Rudolf as a representative of 'göttliche Gerechtigkeit', office and order: all plots and subplots revolve around him.³⁰ Yet

²⁷ For details on Habsburg attempts to justify the multinational empire through claims of legitimacy see Introduction, pp. 2-4.

²⁸ Schwan, 'Bruderzwist', p. 59.

²⁹ Lorenz, *Dichter des sozialen Konflikts*, pp. 130-147; and Jürgen Schröder, "'Der Tod macht gleich'" Grillparzers Geschichtsdramen', in *Franz Grillparzer: Historie und Gegenwart*, ed. by Gerhard Neumann and Günter Schnitzler (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 1994), pp. 37-58 (pp. 50-57).

³⁰ Gerhart Baumann, 'Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg: Das Drama gegenwärtiger Geschichte', in *Franz Grillparzer: Historie und Gegenwartigkeit*, ed. by Gerhard Neumann and Günter Schnitzler (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 1994), pp. 123-142 (pp. 129-130).

this 'central' figure is absent from Acts II and V. His refusal to take decisive action is a major cause of his relatives' plotting (Act II) and their decision to act against his orders. Lorenz perceives Rudolf's hesitancy and resilience against religious fanaticism as a favourable contrast with Mathias and Ferdinand.³¹ Mathias is indecisive, driven by the Machiavellian schemer Bishop Klesel who, as Reeve demonstrates, acts as a stage director, controlling the thoughts and movements of others.³² Mathias acts rashly to satisfy his vanity. His determination to continue fighting the Turks despite huge casualties and imminent defeat is motivated by his desire to restore his honour (*DKV*, III: 404). Rudolf is frustrated by Mathias's 'leeres Heldenspiel' (*DKV*, III: 461), but horrified by Ferdinand's inhumanity, which is shown when he learns of Ferdinand's expulsion of twenty thousand Protestants from Prague, and Ferdinand's calculated abandonment of a Protestant woman to marry a Catholic (*DKV*, III: 393). Rudolf declares, 'Sind hier nicht Menschen? | Ich will bei Menschen sein' (*DKV*, III: 394). Robertson argues that in certain respects Rudolf resembles Grillparzer's perception of Joseph II. His tolerance and concern for suffering humanity contrasts admirably with Ferdinand's callousness and, similarly to Joseph II, his tolerant attitude towards religious pluralism and diversity is combined with a desire to achieve unity. Rudolf's death amid failure and ingratitude also recalls that of Joseph II.³³

By contrast, Roe argues that it is misguided to interpret the emperor as a positive figure. Rudolf perceives his role as that of a 'moral watchdog', preserving a fine balance between warring forces: 'Ich bin das Band, das diese Garbe hält, | Unfruchtbar selbst, doch

³¹ Lorenz, *Dichter des sozialen Konflikts*, p. 133.

³² William C. Reeve, *The Federfuchser/Penpusher from Lessing to Grillparzer: A Study Focused on Grillparzer's Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), pp. 28-47.

³³ Ritchie Roberston, 'The Failure of Enlightenment in Grillparzer's *Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg* and Goethe's *Die natürliche Tochter*', in *Für All, was Menschen je erfahren: Beiträge zu Franz Grillparzers Werk*, ed. by Joseph P. Strelka (Bern: Peter Lang, 1995), pp. 165-187 (p. 171).

nötig, weil es bindet' (*DKV*, III: 421).³⁴ This attitude leads to inactivity and stagnation. Roe compares Rudolf to Metternich who, in the 1840s, attempted to preserve order by standing still.³⁵ In an analysis of Metternich's policies in 1839, Grillparzer described such attempts as a crime against man and God, and ultimately doomed to failure (*GW*, XI: 108-109). Yet this comparison is limited, as Metternich imposed repressive measures throughout the period 1815-48 to hinder reform, whilst Rudolf remains passive. Nevertheless, Rudolf's hesitation and blind defence of the status quo shows that, similarly to Metternich, he may be a man of honour but he is no politician or ruler (*GW*, XI: 98).³⁶ Schaum emphasises Rudolf's status as a self-professed 'schwacher, unbegabter Mann' (*DKV*, III: 389). He is aware of the grave political situation, yet believes events are beyond his control: he may stall but not resolve 'den vielverschlungenen Knoten der Verwirrung' (*DKV*, III: 393).³⁷ In 1827, Grillparzer wrote: 'Es kann keine Frage seyn, daß ein *entschloßener*, talentreicher Mann in Rudolfs Lage wohl zweckdienlichere Mittel zur Ausgleichung der sich kreuzenden Interessen würde gefunden haben'.³⁸ Yet, as Lorenz and Schaum note, the 'active' figures of Mathias, Ferdinand and Leopold provide no positive alternative but accelerate disaster.³⁹

Grillparzer's ambivalent characterisation of Rudolf is reflected in the impenetrable complexity of the drama as a whole that defies simplification, reflecting Grillparzer's engagement with philosophies of history. Anders identifies a number of 'central frontiers' around which she argues *Bruderzwist* is structured. These divisions are between the old and young generations, and the Catholic and Protestant faiths. Anders discerns two conflicting

³⁴ Roe, *Major Works*, p. 233.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 239-240.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Konrad Schaum, *Grillparzer-Studien* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2001) p. 42.

³⁸ See Bachmeier's commentary in *DKV*, III: 795-796.

³⁹ Lorenz, *Dichter des sozialen Konflikts*, pp. 136-138; and Schaum, *Grillparzer*, p. 42.

structural models: a 'homogeneous' model, which she associates with tradition and Catholicism; and a 'heterogeneous' one, which she equates with modern pluralism and Protestantism.⁴⁰ The founding principles of the homogeneous system are order, unity and stability, as embodied by Rudolf II. Most other figures she associates with the 'modern' model based on personal interest and ambition.⁴¹ Grillparzer's decision to alter the balance between young and old generations, by presenting Ferdinand as Rudolf's nephew when he was his cousin, further associates the emperor's rivals with the heterogeneous order and emphasises the isolated position of Rudolf and the traditional order he represents. The vulnerability of the old order is projected visually through Rudolf's physical weakness. On every appearance he leans on a stick or is supported by Rumpf. Confined to Prague castle, Rudolf embodies a sense of immobility, reflecting the rigidity of the 'old' system in comparison to Mathias who is mobile, moving continually between battlefields and negotiating with different religious and social groups.⁴² Anders acknowledges flaws in her systematic approach, not least her association of Catholicism and Protestantism with the old and new orders respectively. Mathias, Ferdinand and Leopold are Catholics, Habsburgs and arguably less pluralistic than Rudolf, yet Anders argues that desire for self-advancement through violent means aligns them with the heterogeneous model.⁴³ The problems arising from Anders's attempts to impose a system on the divergent forces at work in *Bruderzwist* reflect the difficulty of simplifying the drama's many complexities: *Bruderzwist* resists

⁴⁰ Caroline Anders, „...der Zündstoff liegt, der diese Mine donnernd sprengt gen Himmel“: Strategien der Ordnungsdestruktion in Franz Grillparzers dramatischem Werk (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2008), pp. 138-147.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., pp. 141-142.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 144-157.

rationalisation, just as Grillparzer perceived human action and history as defying schematisation.

Conflicting political forces dominate *Bruderzwist*, thwarting attempts to distinguish between private and public realms. From his first appearance, Rudolf seeks a private space as a retreat from the increasingly chaotic and immoral public stage. Within the space of five lines (ll. 215-220) he repeats the word 'allein' seven times (*DKV*, III: 383-384). In Act III, Rumpf recounts Rudolf's physical violence when approached with news of political developments (*DKV*, III: 429). His extreme refusal to interact with the outside world reveals Rudolf's disillusionment with political action and the falsity it demands. Schröder notes there are no 'evil intentions' in *Bruderzwist*: evil is no longer a matter of clear choice, but rather inherent in political circumstances.⁴⁴ Rudolf seeks to construct a barrier between himself and the public sphere as a protection against the corrupting influence of politics, which is symbolised by his wish to found a secret society of 'Friedensritter[n]' (*DKV*, III: 422). He despairs to Julius: 'Die Welt verlangt den Schein. Wir Beide nur | Wir tragen innerhalb des Kleids den Orden' (*DKV*, III: 432). Yet Rudolf becomes trapped by his own refusal to engage with the outside world: he is believed dead before the event (*DKV*, III: 420), and forfeits his power to more active figures. This theme recalls Schiller's portrait of the idealist Max Piccolomini in *Wallenstein*, through which Schiller gives devastating dramatic expression to his view of the corrupting nature of politics. Max believes politics should follow the laws of humanity. He represents a world of pure morality separate from the vicious circle of history and politics. When treachery seems unavoidable, he would rather die than follow the

⁴⁴ Schröder, 'Tod macht gleich', pp. 147-154.

crooked path that taints the actions of Octavio and Wallenstein.⁴⁵ Schiller and Grillparzer acknowledge the impossibility of retreating from political action, of which immorality has become an integral, unavoidable element.

Rudolf rejects political action in favour of alchemy and astrology. On his first appearance, he is immersed in art and literature, and resists the efforts of servants and relatives to engage him with pressing political developments (*DKV*, III: 383). Roe compares Rudolf's preoccupation with the stars to that of Schiller's Wallenstein. Both men look to the stars for guidance, yet whereas Wallenstein sought metaphysical support for his selfish ambitions, Rudolf's interest is more genuine.⁴⁶ For Rudolf, the stars represent an image of divine order and harmony to be contrasted with the futile world of human ambition and activity: 'Dort oben wohnt die Ordnung, dort ihr Haus | Hier unten eitle Willkür und Verwirrung' (*DKV*, III: 391). Rudolf's efforts to explain this order evaporate into incoherence and silence, yet he considers it his task to make the state a reflection of this order.⁴⁷ For Schaum, Rudolf embodies a heightened sense of historical-political insight: 'Rudolf ist das Gewissen, das richtende, unbestechliche Bewußtsein seiner Zeit'.⁴⁸ Rudolf recognises history as an unending pattern of continuity and change: 'das Alte scheidet und das Neue wird [...] stets dasselbe' (*DKV*, III: 460). This process transcends his present, yet he trusts in the permanence of the Habsburg legacy, as it resists the arguments of human wisdom: 'Mein Haus wird bleiben, immerdar, ich weiß | weil es einig mit dem Geist des All' (*DKV*, III: 424).⁴⁹

⁴⁵ For more detail see Dieter Borchmeyer, 'Wallenstein', in *A Companion to the Works of Friedrich Schiller*, ed. by Steven D. Martinson (Rochester: Camden House, 2005), pp. 189-213 (pp. 203-210); and Menhennet, *Historical Experience*, pp. 58-69.

⁴⁶ Roe, *Major Works*, p. 236.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

⁴⁸ Schaum, *Grillparzer-Studien*, p. 41.

⁴⁹ Roe, *Major Works*, p. 233.

Grillparzer does not absolve Rudolf of responsibility, but rather makes his inactivity the result of a deliberate political decision, of a profound, if deeply pessimistic historical wisdom.⁵⁰

Despite commendable ideals and superior insight, Rudolf fails to apply abstract principles to reality.⁵¹ His rare actions are rash and inhumane: his refusal to reconsider Rußworm's execution (*DKV*, III: 386), and his condemnation of Don Cäsar to death by throwing away the keys to his prison as he bleeds to death (*DKV*, III: 457). Julius express a sense of injustice:

Liegt nun daran, daß er vor seinen Richtern
Erläutere was er tat und was ihn trieb,
Daß nicht wie ein verzehrend, reißend Tier,
Daß wie ein Mensch er aus dem Leben scheide (*DKV*, III: 456)

Rudolf is visibly shaken by his actions as the stage directions reveal: *'mit zitternder, von Weinen erstickter Stimme [...] Er wankt nach der linken Seite von Rumpf unterstützt ab'* (*DKV*, III: 457). He is the only leadership contender who is not driven by his ambitions and desire for power, yet even the defender of balance and moderation in the play surrenders to personal anger, as he strikes down arguably his weakest adversary. Rudolf's antagonism towards Don Cäsar reveals despair at his inability to prevent the onslaught of modernity: *'Die Zeit kann ich nicht bänd'gen, aber ihn, | Ihn will ich bänd'gen, hilft der gnäd'ge Gott'* (*DKV*, III: 389). As in Schiller's *Wallenstein*, the force of time continually impinges on the action (*DKV*, III: 411/473/478). Rudolf's destruction of his son is symbolic of his desire to erase what he perceives as the evils of the age, yet this includes his own guilt. His illegitimate son is not only a symbol of the new age: he is the living embodiment of Rudolf's departure

⁵⁰ Lamport, *Classical Drama*, p. 192.

⁵¹ Roe, *Major Works*, pp. 233-242.

from traditional ideas of legitimacy.⁵² The impending collapse of Rudolf's system is the result of internal decay as well as outward pressure, just as Grillparzer believed Metternich's system based on claims of Habsburg legitimacy sowed the seeds of its own demise through repressive politics (1815-48).⁵³

This complex fusion of excessive reflection and reckless action inspired commentators to hail Rudolf Grillparzer's most profound and thought-provoking creation.⁵⁴ Anders highlights Rudolf's torn, unstable psychological condition, which contrasts with his goals of unity and stability.⁵⁵ He vacillates between despair and illusions of greatness. When Prague castle no longer provides sanctuary from the outside world, he flees to the higher order that he wished to emulate on earth (*DKV*, III: 464-465). Anders identifies Don Cäsar as the champion of the modern order, in which subjectivity has gained prominence and man dictates his own fate: a concept underlined by his emphatic use of the personal pronoun 'ich'.⁵⁶ Rudolf's illegitimate son spearheads the rebellion against authority, pillaging, looting and terrorising. Nevertheless, his decline follows a similar pattern to that of his father. Both father and son find themselves disorientated in an unfamiliar world. Rudolf looks to the stars for direction, whilst Don Cäsar projects his desire for truth onto Lukrezia: she and her father symbolise the private life of the normal citizen. In this turbulent age, they are potential victims of powerful, irresponsible figures who impinge on their domestic setting.⁵⁷

⁵² Gérard Schneilin, 'Le Type du Zerrissener', *Études Germaniques*, 47 (1992), 246-263 (p. 260).

⁵³ See Introduction, Section 1, pp. 4-7 and 11-12.

⁵⁴ Johannes Immanuel Volkelt, *Grillparzer als Dichter des Tragischen* (Nördlingen: Beck, 1888); cited in Ian F. Roe, *Franz Grillparzer: A Century of Criticism* (Columbia: Camden House, 1995), p. 99.

⁵⁵ Anders, *Strategien der Ordnungsdestruktion*, pp. 167-168.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 143-144.

⁵⁷ Robertson, 'Failure of Enlightenment', p. 182.

Reminiscent of Otto in *Ein treuer Diener*, Don Cäsar is essentially fatherless. He searches in vain for truth in a world of deceitful appearances:

Was soll ich auch in dieser wüsten Welt,
Ein Zerrbild zwischen Niedrigkeit und Größe [...]
Was ist es auch: ein Weib? Halb Spiel, halb Tücke
Ein etwas, das ein etwas und ein nichts (DKV, III: 446-447)

Don Cäsar, like Rudolf, is disillusioned by the falsity of political action. He shoots Lukrezia in a rash act of madness, not dissimilar from the circumstances of Rudolf's rare outbursts. In his remorseful state, Don Cäsar retreats from life, seeking arrest, imprisonment and death, just as Rudolf barricades himself in Prague castle. Don Cäsar is one of many figures, through which Grillparzer grapples with irrational aspects of human existence such as psychological instability, sexual desire and violence. Ottokar's demise due to excessive pride, sexual humiliation and rash, ill-advised violence in *König Ottokar* provides another example. The recurrence of these themes emphasises Grillparzer's conviction that irrational, disruptive elements are inherent in human nature and act as obstacles impeding human progress.

In *Bruderzwist*, young figures are not associated with hope, but instead represent decay and loss, suggesting the possibility of a better future has collapsed. Old age is, equally, not equated with wisdom.⁵⁸ Grillparzer lost faith in human progress and foresaw a dark future. This resignation reflects Grillparzer's lost confidence in the possibility of effecting socio-political change in his age. His political views changed considerably over the period in which he wrote *Bruderzwist*. By 1848, Grillparzer was less interested in securing reform than in ensuring the survival of multinational state structures. As revolutionary activity escalated and chaos loomed, Grillparzer's poem 'Feldmarshall Radetzky' was an attempt to counter

⁵⁸ Schröder, 'Tod macht gleich', p. 55.

disorder and bolster the multinational empire (*GW*, I: 117).⁵⁹ *Bruderzwist* can be viewed as a warning against the dangers of allowing multifarious, disparate political and social pressures to mount and the importance of maintaining stable government. Grillparzer was aware nonetheless that preserving outdated systems in opposition to modern times could only exacerbate fractures. Grillparzer thus stages the intractability of the Habsburgs' predicament in the 1840s. He stresses the ineffectual and dangerous nature of extreme behaviour such as Don Cäsar's self-centred responses and Ferdinand's non-pluralistic solutions, and advocates the importance of moderation in public and private existence.

While Grillparzer warns against radicalism, the unambiguous definition of justice, which shaped *König Ottokar* has disappeared. Instead, characters appear stranded without guidance, their judgement clouded by the lure of power and personal passions. This grim outlook is evident in the final tableau, in which Mathias kneels in private, whilst crowds celebrate his succession outside the castle:

Lärm und Musik von neuem aus der Ferne.

MATHIAS *gegen den Tisch gekehrt in einiger Entfernung niederkniefend und wiederholt die Brust schlagend:*

Mea culpa, mea culpa,

Mea maxima culpa.

VON DER STRASSE Vivat Mathias!

Indem das Vivatrufen fortwährt und Mathias das Gesicht mit beiden Händen bedeckt fällt der Vorhang. (DKV, III: 482)

The collision of private and public spheres culminating in the usurpation of the private by the political is urgently apparent in the staging. As in *König Ottokar*, noises off-stage impinge on the private space presented on stage. Klesel's political prowess facilitated his master's rise to

⁵⁹ For further discussion of the changes in Grillparzer's political views during the 1840s see Roe, *Major Works*, pp. 243-247.

power, so when Ferdinand engineers Klesel's expulsion to Rome, Mathias's weakness is exposed. Only when the 'political game' subsides can Mathias see the consequences of his actions. Public expectation weighs on Mathias's shoulders and he visibly buckles under the pressure. *Bruderzwist* opened with the questioning of supposedly legitimate authority. It ends with Mathias's admission of illegitimacy. He is not the only culpable figure. Grillparzer's previously unified concept of justice has become distorted and fragmented as individuals impose their own definitions.⁶⁰ This causes isolation and disorientation for all parties.

Mathias's question, 'wird mir den nimmer Ruh?' (*DKV*, III: 480) in the final scene recalls Rudolf's demands for solitude in Act I (*DKV*, III: 383-384). These parallels between Rudolf's entrance and Mathias's exit underline *Bruderzwist*'s cyclical structure, which Schröder sees as reflecting Grillparzer's pessimistic perception of history: 'Der Geschichtsprozeß wird zu einem Kreislauf des Verfalls und Niedergangs. [...] Bei Grillparzer kreist die Geschichte hoffnungslos um sich selbst'.⁶¹ *Bruderzwist* does not only comment on socio-political developments of Grillparzer's age, it provides a vision of historical development. Lampport defines *Bruderzwist* as the most anti-Hegelian of historical dramas, in which the 'world-historical process' is not one of dialectical advance to some certain, if remote, state of future perfection, but one of collapse and decay.⁶²

Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg is a pessimistic play, offering little hope for the future.

There is, however, a sense of relief and renewal in Act IV, as Rudolf surrenders his monarchical role and reverts to 'humanity': 'Nicht Kaiser bin ich mehr, ich bin ein Mensch |

⁶⁰ Leopold deems it acceptable to use armed intervention against Prague to protect Rudolf's interests despite the emperor's reservations, whilst Ferdinand expels Protestants and all conspire against the emperor.

⁶¹ Schröder, 'Tod macht gleich', p. 56.

⁶² Lampport, *Classical Drama*, p. 192.

und will mich laben an dem allgemeinen' (DKV, III: 464). This is an inversion of Rudolf I's rise to power in *König Ottokar*: 'Was sterblich war, ich hab es ausgezogen | Und bin der Kaiser nur, der niemals stirbt' (DKV, II: 462). These lines articulate a need to subjugate one's private self in the name of public service. Rudolf I rises to the task of leadership in *König Ottokar* similarly to Hal in Shakespeare's *Henry IV Part II*, who denounces his young rebellious self to become Henry V.⁶³ This process of transformation stresses the responsibility that accompanies public service. Yet Grillparzer extends this idea, as Schiller does in *Wallenstein*, to convey a sense of the great burden of political action, which can undermine the humanity of the individual. Throughout Grillparzer's works, there is an appeal to humanity and yearning for the classical ideals of order, morality and justice. In *Bruderzwist*, these principles are more distant than ever. Classical values are incompatible with the political reality of nineteenth-century Europe, in which 'legitimate' authority has brought about its own demise. This reflects the thesis that Habsburg repression exacerbated tensions and contributed to the outbreak of revolution in 1848.⁶⁴ In *Bruderzwist*, Grillparzer's focus has shifted from classical values to the exploration of irrationality as endemic to humanity. This, for Grillparzer, is an inherent problem of history. Grillparzer perceives human progress as inhibited by unpredictable, irrational human nature. This is illustrated structurally and thematically in Grillparzer's portrayal of history as unwieldy and unpredictable.

⁶³ Rudolf I also speaks of a rebellious youth, which he has left behind (DKV, II: 465-466).

⁶⁴ Steven Beller, *A Concise History of Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 104-124. See also Introduction, Section 1, pp. 2-14.

CONCLUSION

Sie haben mich nie verstanden,
Und verstehen mich jetzt noch nicht;
Es gibt in den deutschen Landen
Viel Dichter, doch kein Gedicht.
(*GW*, II: 349)

The epigram 'An die Norddeutschen' (1856) elucidates Grillparzer's disillusionment with what he perceived as an uncomprehending public and his disappointment with German literary creation, which the introduction showed, was stifled by repressive socio-political conditions. The sense of atrophy and collapse characterising the Habsburg Empire before 1848 did not dissipate, but rather intensified after the reassertion of reactionary policies in the 1850s.¹ The accelerating disintegration of the empire's multinational structures and the growing momentum of the national movement seemed to support Grillparzer's conviction that the nineteenth century was heading towards 'Bestialität' (*GW*, II: 286). Alfred Verdross commends Grillparzer's insight into socio-political developments, and considers his fears regarding nationalism to have been confirmed by the major wars of the twentieth century.²

In his later years, Grillparzer became a celebrated Austrian figure, widely seen as a conservative and loyal supporter of the Habsburg government.³ The thesis argues that this assessment ignores key strands of the dramas and views voiced in private writings, which suggest that Grillparzer's representation of Habsburg history is not a sign of uncritical loyalty to the Monarchy and its policies, but rather dedication to the values embodied by the

¹ See Introduction, pp. 14-15.

² Alfred Verdross, 'Die Politische Dichtung Grillparzers', *GLL*, 18 (1964), 1-14 (pp. 13-14).

³ See Renate Langer, 'Grillparzer und die Deutsche Reichsgründung', in *Literatur und Nation: die Gründung des Deutschen Reiches 1871 in der deutschsprachigen Literatur: mit einer Auswahlbibliographie*, ed. by Klaus Amann and Karl Wagner (Vienna: Böhlau, 1996), pp. 317-341.

multinational state. Misinterpretations persist in modern day readings of Grillparzer. The ambiguous nature of his dramas allows for contrasting interpretations. Indeed, scholars may never agree over the nature of Grillparzer's political and aesthetic outlook.

The thesis grapples with a wide range of complex issues surrounding political and aesthetic concerns in Grillparzer's historical dramas *König Ottokars Glück und Ende*, *Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn* and *Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg*. In turn, the investigation has shown the richness and complexity of Grillparzer's works. Direct links were made between Grillparzer's political views, his perception of the age, and his aesthetic approach. Instability and uncertainty permeate the structure and atmosphere of Grillparzer's dramas, becoming increasingly prominent in later plays. The dramas provide fuller insight into Grillparzer's political views in comparison to media with more linear forms, such as epigrams and poems. The multi-dimensional dramatic form enabled Grillparzer to explore and express ideas and contradictions central to these ideas in a multitude of ways. His key themes have been identified and discussed: the portrayal of leadership figures, the interplay of private and public and an ethical concern with justice and morality. Investigation of key themes in conjunction with staging – the use of costume, props, language and stage directions – has allowed the emergence of an image of Grillparzer's literary affinities and political stance, and an understanding of his attitude to broader historical and philosophical questions. Grillparzer engaged with challenges of the day, reflecting the pressures acting on the multinational state, from external forces and from within. Censorship posed a continual hindrance. Grillparzer was forced to find increasingly subtle and creative means through which to explore and present his concerns.

On the basis of the limited scope of this investigation, the following conclusions can be drawn about Grillparzer's political convictions. Grillparzer's political outlook leading up to 1848 was broadly in line with that of moderate liberals of the day. Moderation was of the utmost importance, as shown by his shocked reaction to radicalism in 1848. Grillparzer distanced himself from all forms of extreme behaviour, instead advocating stability and considered action, as he wrote in an epigram of 1848:

Nicht hier noch dort in den Extremen zünftig,
Ich glaube bald, ich bin vernünftig. (GW, II: 282)

Grillparzer was an opponent of revolution, a concept conveyed through the humanitarian values and principles of peace and stability propounded in *König Ottokar* and *Ein treuer Diener*. However, he did not resign himself to repression (1815-1848). He avoided active participation in demonstrations, yet engaged in political discussion and criticised government policies in private writings and more subtly in dramatic works. Expression of support for the government in his 'Aufrufe' and Radetzky poem were reactions to the threat he perceived to the survival of the multinational empire. Grillparzer's desire for stable government in 1848 arose from his support for the multinational state and the universal principles it embodied, not a desire to condone repressive measures. Grillparzer admired Joseph II and his strategy of promoting diversity, whilst preserving the empire's unity.⁴ The concept of containing diversity within a unified whole is reflected structurally and thematically in Grillparzer's attempts to impose order on unwieldy historical material, for example by using intertwining subplots.⁵ The challenge faced by the Habsburg Empire in the 1840s of maintaining balance between conflicting forces is echoed in the form and content

⁴ See Introduction, pp. 7-8.

⁵ See Chapter 3, pp. 66-67.

of *Bruderzwist*, where divergent strands cannot be held together, as Rudolf II's declares: 'Das Band gelöst, bricht es die Einzelnen' (*DKV*, II: 463). The drama depicts the empire on the brink of the Thirty Years' War and acts as a warning of imminent crisis in the mid-nineteenth century. The early dramas in particular embrace the possibility of effecting change by highlighting problems. Grillparzer grew increasingly cynical concerning the possibility of effecting political change through literary means, as reflected by his withdrawal from the stage in 1838.⁶ In *Bruderzwist*, he seems resigned to the role of a disapproving observer.

A number of conclusions can be drawn concerning Grillparzer's position within dominant literary movements and his approach to historical drama. Grillparzer drew on an extensive range of literary traditions to present his ideas. Predominant influences include Weimar Classicism, Viennese theatre and political and psychological aspects anticipating realism and modern movements. Grillparzer admired the ambitions and values of Weimar Classicism, yet wished to imbue his dramas with theatricality. He was also fascinated with psychological complexities of human nature, his exploration of which anticipated insights of the post-Freudian age.⁷ In regards to historical drama, Grillparzer stands poised between political, national and ethical traditions. His plays engage with political concerns of the age. Grillparzer used national material such as the founding of the Habsburg dynasty, yet rather than evoking historical events to glorify the present, he inverts this trend, highlighting the rift between past and present to warn of impending trauma, for example by recalling the Thirty Years' War in *Bruderzwist*. Grillparzer also evokes ethical issues central to Weimar Classicism. In *König Ottokar*, there is an ethical distinction between the morally authentic

⁶ See Chapter 3, p. 63.

⁷ See Introduction, pp. 16-20.

Rudolf I and the unjust Ottokar. Margarethe's loyalty provides an image of moral fortitude, whilst Bancbanus can be regarded as heroic in his refusal to submit to a desire for revenge, though some commentators criticise his behaviour as subservient. Grillparzer later distanced himself from Bancbanus's views but nonetheless insisted there was heroism in his actions (SB: 200).⁸ By the time *Bruderzwist* was completed, this position is even more complex. Moral distinctions have dissolved. There is no longer a clear definition of justice against which actions of characters are measured, exacerbating the sense of crisis and upheaval.

Grillparzer's historical dramas explore the burden of public responsibility, the moral sacrifice involved and the detrimental effect of office on the private existence of the individual. Yet retreat from the public stage provides no feasible alternative, but rather leads to corruption and inhumanity.⁹ Grillparzer resists adherence to one tradition. He departs from the legacy of Weimar Classicism, as he does not seek harmony in art, but rather illustrates what he perceives as the impossibility of achieving unity and resolution; his dramas reflect the fragmentation he perceived in the world.

The thesis argues that Grillparzer's historical dramas do not focus exclusively on observation and discussion of nineteenth-century socio-political developments. Grillparzer moves beyond the concerns of his age and contributes to wider debates regarding human existence and historical progress. The result is a combination of acute psychological probing with a broad philosophical and historical vision.¹⁰ Grillparzer's historical dramas revolve around complex character-portraits through which he delves into non-rational elements of

⁸ See Chapter 2, pp. 51-52.

⁹ See Introduction, p. 14.

¹⁰ F. J. Lamport, *German Classical Drama: Theatre, Humanity and Nation 1750-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 199.

human nature. These elements emerge elsewhere in Grillparzer's dramatic works, for example in the exploration of sexuality and desire in *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen* (1832).¹¹ In the historical dramas, non-rational elements include Ottokar's excessive pride and ambition and the complex portraits of female sexuality depicted through Gertrude and Erny. Otto and Don Cäsar fulfil similar functions in *Ein treuer Diener* and *Bruderzwist* respectively: both experience a downward spiral of egotism, anger and despair. Even the apparently honourable and morally upright figures Bancbanus and Rudolf II experience outbursts of fury and dejection. Through such complex psychological portraits, Grillparzer suggests that unstable and irrational characteristics are inherent in human nature. This conviction intensifies through the course of the dramas, culminating in the depiction of an array of conflicting and dysfunctional personalities in *Bruderzwist*.¹²

Grillparzer's perception of the flaws of humanity links directly to his attitude regarding philosophies of history. Grillparzer rejects Hegel's concept of history as a dialectical progression moving towards an ideal point of rationality in the future.¹³ Instead, he portrays history and humanity as diverse and unpredictable. Grillparzer becomes increasingly convinced that irrational, disruptive tendencies inherent in human nature act as constant obstacles impeding human progress. In the historical dramas, rational, restrained behaviour is exceptional, as exemplified by Bancbanus. A lone figure amidst egotism and violence, his restraint appears extraordinary, as does Gertrude's unconditional defence of her brother or Margarethe's continued loyalty to Ottokar. This trend of typically irrational and detrimental

¹¹ See Mark Ward, *Franz Grillparzer: Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, French and German Publications, 2007); and Edward E. Papst, *Grillparzer: Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen* (London: Edward Arnold, 1967).

¹² Pathological elements are apparent in the personalities of many characters, primarily Rudolf II, Mathias, Ferdinand and Don Cäsar: (*DKV*, III: 393-4/446-451/456-7). See Chapter 3, pp. 75-81.

¹³ See Introduction, pp. 8-9.

behaviour provides the framework for *Bruderzwist*, which documents moral and political decay in line with Grillparzer's increasingly pessimistic view of history.

Despite the pessimistic tone of *Bruderzwist*, Grillparzer never lost faith in humanity: he believed in essence that 'der Mensch ist gut'.¹⁴ Acts of heroism and humanitarianism provide rays of hope. Though there is no definitive sense of political legitimacy or ethical authenticity in *Bruderzwist*, there are equally no wholly immoral figures. Grillparzer stressed the importance of moderation in response to social and political turbulence. He never ceased to participate in politics in some form.¹⁵ Grillparzer was not politically active in the way that Büchner or Grabbe were. Yet, as he explained in defence of Bancbanus, there are different forms of heroism. Grillparzer acknowledged admirable traits in revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries alike, implying radical action is not the only means of implementing change (*SB*: 200). Through observation, reflection and subtle criticism, Grillparzer revealed his insight demonstrating, for Verdross, his deserved place amongst the great European thinkers of the nineteenth century.¹⁶ Grillparzer knew his form of 'heroism' was not readily recognised or understood, but remained hopeful that his works would resonate with future generations. In an epigram of 1853 he wrote:

Ich rede nicht, wo jeder spricht,
Wo alle schweigen, schweig' ich nicht.
Weh' euch und mir, wenn je von uns ich wieder singe.
Ich bin der Dichter der letzten Dinge. (*GW*, II: 298)

¹⁴ Ulrich Fülleborn, 'Kein Dichter der Deutschen? Zu Franz Grillparzers 200. Geburtstag', in *Grillparzer-Bilder 1991: Dokumentation und Bibliographie von Artikeln deutschsprachiger Zeitungen zum 200. Geburtstag des Dichters*, ed. by Monika Klein and Michael Klein (Innsbruck: Institut für Germanistik der Universität Innsbruck, 1993), 37-45 (p. 39).

¹⁵ See Introduction, pp. 12-15.

¹⁶ Verdross, 'Politische Dichtung', pp. 13-14.

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