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*Welttheater:*  
Hofmannsthal,  
Richard von Kralik,  
and the Revival of Catholic  
Drama in Austria,  
1890–1934

JUDITH BENISTON

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***WELTTHEATER:***  
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**RICHARD VON KRALIK,**  
**AND THE REVIVAL OF CATHOLIC**  
**DRAMA IN AUSTRIA**  
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## CHAPTER ONE

### WELTTHEATER IN CONTEXT

#### *Introduction*

Like many turn-of-the-century writers, Hofmannsthal had a lifelong fascination with the theatre and with theatrical metaphors. It is no exaggeration to say that they were fundamental to the way in which he thought about the world and about himself. In 1896 he wrote to his friend Leopold von Andrian:

Ich komme so zu mir zurück, wie einer der fortwährend Theater gespielt hat, zwar eine Rolle die seinem Wesen geheimnisvoll nachgeahmt ist, aber doch eine Rolle. Das sind wahrscheinlich Kindereien, aber solche, von denen ich nicht loskomme. Für meine Welt bilden diese Einbildungen den Hintergrund.<sup>1</sup>

Hofmannsthal's world and his responses to it were to change radically during the four decades spanned by his literary career, but theatrical metaphors are nevertheless to be found throughout his literary work, as well as in his jottings and correspondence.

Aestheticism becomes an attempt to view the daily flux as one would a play ('jedes Tages Fließen / Und Fluten als ein Schauspiel zu genießen');<sup>2</sup> but the risk, as with too much cultural exposure, is a lack of immediacy and intensity: 'Auch fürchtest Du, durch die Lebensluft der Bücher wie ein Schauspieler zu werden, dem eigenen Leben entfremdet' (RA3 424). The artist's self-stylization is seen as a matter of staging: 'Er setzt sich in Szene; *nicht* im großen und ganzen, wie die andern, nein, Tag für Tag, Stimmung für Stimmung, jeden Übergang, jede Nuance, jede Erfahrung, jedes Existenzatom'

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<sup>1</sup> Hugo von Hofmannsthal – Leopold von Andrian, *Briefwechsel*, ed. by Walter H. Perl (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1968), p. 64: Hofmannsthal to Andrian, 4 May 1896.

<sup>2</sup> Hofmannsthal's works are quoted, where possible, from Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Rudolf Hirsch et al. (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1975–), cited in the text as W; otherwise from the *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. by Bernd Schoeller and Rudolf Hirsch, 10 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1979–80), cited thus: *Erzählungen, Erfundene Gespräche und Briefe, Reisen* (E), *Reden und Aufsätze* (RA), *Dramen* (D). Here (W3 48).

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(RA1 100: italics in original). The great actors of the day provide a focus for Hofmannsthal's concerns about the psychological effects of role-play and the nature of the 'self': after the death of Friedrich Mitterwurzer, he asks: 'Wer aber war er, und wer war er nicht?' (W1 82). In *Andreas* (1907–27) death means 'aus dem Theater fort müssen, bevor der Vorhang einmal aufgegangen war' (E 308); and, shortly after the publication of Freud's *Die Traumdeutung* (1900), Hofmannsthal writes casually of 'jene Schauplätze, die nachts in unserem Hirn sich aufschließen' (RA1 321).

Hofmannsthal notes as early as 1893 that the poet is a creator of myths (RA3 361), and increasingly uses theatrical metaphors within the context of a *theatrum mundi*. Whereas in *Der Kaiser und die Hexe* (1897) this becomes a vehicle to explore tensions within the creative psyche, in *Der weiße Fächer*, completed in the same year, it is underpinned by social and moral concerns: a young man who has grown up too fast is 'wie ein Schauspieler [...], der sich seine Rolle aus dem Stegreif selber dichtet und auf keine Stichwörter achtgibt' (W3 160). Against a background of carnivalesque unreality, Weidenstamm and his man in *Der Abenteurer und die Sängerin* (1898) play 'Arlekin und Truffaldino / in einem tollen Stück' (W5 140). In *Jedermann* (1911), however, the lightness of the Commedia dell'arte gives way to the darker tones of the morality play: insofar as the play of life ends with the ineluctable reality of death, modern man continues to re-enact the fate of the medieval Everyman. Furthermore, the private drama of the individual is part of what Hofmannsthal later conceives as 'das Welttheater, auf welchem die Menschen vor Gott ihr Lebensspiel aufführen' (D3 172).

The mutability of the *theatrum mundi* in Hofmannsthal's work is nowhere more striking than in the contrast between the lyrical drama *Das kleine Welttheater* (1897) and the festival play *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* (1922). While the young Hofmannsthal concentrates on the private world theatre of the poet's imagination, the mature writer, sensing a need for ethical reconstruction, reinstates the topos in one of its most familiar public forms. Instead of asserting his creative individuality, he writes in 1922 that he is happy to be a mere 'Statist', contributing to a revival of Austria's Baroque tradition, but not seeking the limelight.<sup>3</sup> Paying particular attention to these two works, my aim in this study is to explore Hofmannsthal's treatment of the

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<sup>3</sup> Werner Volke, 'Hugo von Hofmannsthal und Josef Nadler in Briefen', *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Schillergesellschaft*, 18 (1974), 37–88 (p. 78).

*Welttheater* motif, not only as a feature of his literary oeuvre but also in the context of contemporary cultural, political and intellectual developments. To this end, I have looked beyond Hofmannsthal himself, reconstructing as a background to his work the history of cultic drama in Austria between approximately 1875 and 1938. This contextualization has enabled me to shed new light both on Hofmannsthal's individual achievements and on a neglected aspect of Austrian cultural history, namely the Catholic cultural scene. Establishing itself in the early 1890s, the Catholic milieu was an important feature of Austrian cultural life in the last years of the Monarchy and throughout the First Republic: largely independent of the professional theatre, Catholic drama provides a significant contrast to the literature of 'Jung Wien' and develops alongside Hofmannsthal's later interest in traditional forms of religious drama.

The most important figure in this context is Richard von Kralik (1852–1934) who yoked the post-Wagnerian quest for new forms of Christian cultic drama to the rise of the Christian Social party and dominated Austria's Catholic literary culture from the early 1890s until his death in 1934. Kralik is particularly valuable as a crystallization point in this study because, for him, the idea of life as theatre was not just a privileged metaphor but an article of faith, and because for him, as for Hofmannsthal, it was closely associated with a belief in the mythopoeic function of art. Furthermore, both writers were fascinated by Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *El gran teatro del mundo* (*Das große Welttheater*), the Spanish Baroque drama which is probably the most famous exposition of the *theatrum mundi* in European literature: while Hofmannsthal took it as the basis for *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* and alluded to it in *Das kleine Welttheater*, Calderón's text repeatedly served as a focus for Catholic cultural aspirations, with Kralik helping to stage the play in 1897, referring to it countless times in his essayistic work, and producing an abridged version in 1926.

Hofmannsthal's *Das kleine Welttheater*, which reflects and seeks an appropriate artistic response to the uncertainty and intellectual ferment of the 1890s, demands to be interpreted in the first instance as a product of *fin-de-siècle* culture, in which the writer uses a series of theatrical projections in order to explore the nature of the modern creative imagination and thereby interrogate his own psyche. Such an interpretation is pursued in Chapter Two of this study. By highlighting the connection between childhood and theatricality, both in the lyrical drama and in earlier texts depicting the 'soul

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theatres' of aesthetes and artists, it explores the modernity of Hofmannsthal's psychological insights, examining how these co-exist with a metaphysical dimension underpinned by Neo-Platonism.

Following a Faustian itinerary, 'Wir sehn die kleine, dann die große Welt'. Chapters Three and Four investigate the cultural background against which Hofmannsthal constructed his miniature world, showing that the lyrical dramas of the 1890s formed a striking contrast not only to the Catholic cultic drama being promoted at that time but also to the traditions out of which it had emerged, to the monumental theatrical forms cultivated in the nineteenth century, by the Romantics, by Richard Wagner, and by his many imitators. However, it will also become clear in Chapter Three that there are parallels between the successive waves of post-liberal reaction with which Kralik's and Hofmannsthal's work can be associated, and between the evolution of their responses to the *theatrum mundi* topos.

The semi-professional theatrical ventures instigated by Kralik and other Catholic intellectuals in the 1890s will be discussed in Chapter Four. Here and in subsequent chapters, it has been possible to give a detailed picture of reception by drawing on Kralik's substantial collection of press-cuttings, held in the Druckschriftensammlung of the Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek. Chapter Five then juxtaposes two very different forms of 'popular' cultic drama which evolved in the period between 1900 and 1914: on the one hand, the amateur theatricals of the Catholic *Vereinsbühnen* and, on the other, the mass spectacles staged by the impresario Max Reinhardt. Although amateur drama became the focus of Catholic cultural activity in the early years of the new century, especially in Vienna, doubts about its value were part of a larger dispute between liberal and conservative Catholics. Consequently many liberals were prepared to be open-minded towards such works as Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann*, staged by Reinhardt in 1911. Chapter Five closes with an analysis of this play, considering it as a highpoint in the development of Hofmannsthal's interest in cultic drama and of Reinhardt's experiments with arena theatre.

Chapter Six moves on to consider the cultural impact of the First World War, when the enormity of events on the world's stage led many to seek comfort in religion and gave rise to an intensified interest in forms of cultic drama. After tracing the development of Hofmannsthal's cultural conservatism during the War and comparing his wartime journalism with Kralik's, this chapter investigates the phenomenon of the *Laienspiel* which became

immensely popular in Germany and Austria in the immediate aftermath of the War and can be seen as a parallel development to the founding of the Salzburg Festival. In order to do justice to an undeservedly neglected figure, the final section of Chapter Six will evaluate Kralik's importance in Austrian cultural life.

Chapter Seven focuses on the Salzburg Festival. Keeping in mind its co-existence with other forms of Catholic cultural revival, I will concentrate on situating it in that context, exploring Catholic response to the venture, and comparing the original intentions of its founders, and in particular Hofmannsthal, with the form in which it was ultimately realized. This will be followed by a detailed analysis of *Das Salzburger große Welttheater*, the festival play which was Hofmannsthal's most direct response to the postwar situation. Finally, Chapter Eight provides a brief recapitulation of key points and then looks beyond the deaths of both Hofmannsthal and Kralik, outlining some of the ways in which their work and the forms of cultic drama they had championed were used to support the ideology of the Corporate State.

Although two studies of the Catholic milieu in Germany have recently appeared, little attention has been paid to the corresponding area of Austrian culture.<sup>4</sup> There are a number of reasons for this: firstly, amateur and semi-amateur drama, which was a particularly prominent feature of the Catholic cultural scene in Austria, is invariably more sparsely documented and more difficult to investigate than the history of the professional theatre or, indeed, that of the Catholic novel. Secondly, there is the issue of the literary canon: when one is dealing with a protest movement or counter-culture, the works and personalities involved will frequently be far beyond its limits and therefore easily overlooked. Considering the Austrian canon, two further factors must be taken into consideration. One is the unbalanced nature of recent Austrian studies, the other Hofmannsthal's well-known proclivity for myth-making.

Ever since Carl Schorske so persuasively explained Viennese *fin-de-siècle* culture in terms of the political decline of the liberal bourgeoisie, critical attention has tended to concentrate on the modernist culture of the predominantly Jewish intellectual elite; the Catholic aspect, with which large sections

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<sup>4</sup> Jutta Osinski, *Katholizismus und deutsche Literatur im 19. Jahrhundert* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1993); Susanna Schmidt, *'Handlanger der Vergänglichkeit': Zur Literatur des katholischen Milieus 1800–1950* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1994).

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of the population had more affinity, has tended to be neglected.<sup>5</sup> This study is intended to help redress the balance. I will also argue in Chapter Seven that, as far as Hofmannsthal's festival plays and the cultural background to the Salzburg Festival are concerned, a restrictively narrow focus has been encouraged by Hofmannsthal himself, who tried to maintain a distinction between *katholisch* and *klerikal*, and avoided mentioning other movements drawing on the same Catholic cultural traditions, either in his autobiographical notes or in publicity material for the Salzburg Festival. Although it was evident to those contemporary observers who were familiar with the whole cultural scene that Hofmannsthal's traditionalism was not unique and could not be an apolitical affair, this awareness has often been lost in narrow literary studies and those which concentrate exclusively on high culture. For that reason, this study also qualifies Steinberg's somewhat simplistic account of the ideology of the Salzburg Festival by offering a broader perspective on the cultural climate of the First Austrian Republic.<sup>6</sup>

### *Variations on the 'Theatrum Mundi'*

*Der Schauspieler ist die Amöbe unter den Lebewesen [...], das unbestimmbare Urwesen, das sich von der Situation diktieren läßt, ob es Tier oder Pflanze sein soll. (D3 512)*

Ironized thus by Hofmannsthal in 1926, the idea that man is a player on the world's stage is at least as old as the theatre itself. As part of the European cultural tradition it has been traced back to Plato and also to Heraclitus, and the numerous studies of the *theatrum mundi* which are available testify above all to its protean nature and to the fascination it has held for many generations of writers.<sup>7</sup> Although I do not propose to chart the history of the motif in any

---

<sup>5</sup> Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

<sup>6</sup> Michael P. Steinberg, *The Meaning of the Salzburg Festival: Austria as Theater and Ideology, 1890–1938* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990).

<sup>7</sup> Historical analyses are given by Ernst Robert Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Berne: Francke, 1948), pp. 146–52, and Johann Sofer, 'Bemerkungen zur Geschichte des Begriffes "Welttheater"', *Maske und Kothurn*, 2 (1956), 256–68. Curtius traces the topos back to Plato and stresses its moral connotations; Sofer ranges wider, seeing Heraclitus as the starting-point, but is less analytical. A broad survey is also provided by the following collections of essays: *Theatrum Mundi: Götter, Gott und Spielleiter im Drama von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. by Franz Link

systematic manner, I would like in this section to draw attention to some of the characteristically modern forms of the topos which most appealed to turn-of-the-century writers. A detailed account of Calderón's paradigmatic *El gran teatro del mundo*, which the reader may be expecting at this point, will be included in the third section of Chapter Four, where I shall be discussing the play's relevance for an 1890s audience. I do, however, propose to consider in the final section of Chapter One the tricky question of how ostensibly modern images inspired by the theatre, which was so beloved of Austrian writers, drew on and interacted with the country's Baroque traditions. I will illustrate my remarks by referring to selected works by Hofmannsthal's contemporary Arthur Schnitzler and to *Der Tor und der Tod* (1893), the lyrical drama which marked the beginning of Hofmannsthal's interest in traditional notions of *Welttheater*.

Between the mid-seventeenth century, when Calderón produced his allegorical drama *El gran teatro del mundo*, and the late nineteenth century, when Hofmannsthal came onto the literary scene, the tendency had been towards secularization and fragmentation. The Baroque Catholic vision of human society as a fixed hierarchical structure in which each must play his or her God-given role and expect to be judged on his or her performance came to look increasingly dated and restrictive. Reflecting the move towards a more individualist culture, the metaphor of man as actor effectively broke free from the metaphysical framework, thereby making social role-play and its psychological implications the main focus of interest.

Sociological concepts of role-play concern themselves first and foremost with human interaction: individuals participate in the social drama as both actors and spectators; roles are not only attained by being born into them but also, in modern societies, by acquiring them through education and social mobility. Free will remains an issue, since the individual has to resist insidious forms of conditioning which begin in earliest childhood. In literature around 1900 there is indeed a fascination with the idea of the social mask, with climbers and adventurers who disguise their true feelings for purposes of social advancement: Sternheim charts the fortunes of the 'Maske' family in a series of four contemporary comedies beginning with *Die Hose* (1910) and *Der Snob*

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and Günther Niggel, *Sonderband des Literaturwissenschaftlichen Jahrbuchs* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1981); *Welttheater, Mysterienspiel, rituelles Theater: 'Vom Himmel durch die Welt zur Hölle'*, ed. by Peter Csobádi et al. (Anif bei Salzburg: Müller Speiser, 1992). See also Ralf Konersmann, 'Welttheater als Daseinsmetapher', *Neue Rundschau*, 100, ii (1989), 139-51, and Manfred Karnick, *Rollenspiel und Welttheater* (Munich: Fink, 1990).

## CHAPTER ONE

(1913); and Wedekind's *Frühlings Erwachen* (1891) concludes with a masked man taking the adolescent hero out into the world.

The principle of freely chosen roles not only makes society less stable than the Baroque state, it may also create psychological tension within the individual. He or she may play a role for so long that it becomes second nature and obscures his or her original personality; individuals may also be obliged to play several roles simultaneously, as Robert Musil suggests in this extract from *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*:

Denn ein Landesbewohner hat mindestens neun Charaktere, einen Berufs-, einen National-, einen Staats-, einen Klassen-, einen geographischen, einen Geschlechts-, einen bewußten, einen unbewußten und vielleicht auch noch einen privaten Charakter; er vereinigt sie in sich, aber sie lösen ihn auf, und er ist eigentlich nichts als eine kleine, von diesen vielen Rinnsalen ausgewaschene Mulde, in die sie hineinsickern und aus der sie wieder austreten, um mit andern Bächlein eine andre Mulde zu füllen. Deshalb hat jeder Erdbewohner auch noch einen zehnten Charakter, und dieser ist nichts als die passive Phantasie unausgefüllter Räume; er gestattet dem Menschen alles, nur nicht das eine: das ernst zu nehmen, was seine mindestens neun andern Charaktere tun und was mit ihnen geschieht; also mit andern Worten, gerade das nicht, was ihn ausfüllen sollte.<sup>8</sup>

Clearly, the number of roles is arbitrary, and Musil concentrates on those over which the individual has little or no control: gender, nationality, ethnic origin, social class. The bewildering mixture of races, creeds and nationalities in the Habsburg Empire exacerbates the usual difficulties of defining and preserving individual identity in the face of the restrictions and obligations imposed by society. If the individual still has a 'self', then this is his tenth character, an ironic core which prevents him from taking the others seriously but at the same time robs him of the opportunity to find fulfilment in any aspect of his social activity. Interestingly, Hofmannsthal expresses similar concerns in 'Die Briefe des Zurückgekehrten' (1907) where the returnee feels that people have become more complicated in the eighteen years of his absence: 'ihre Kopfgedanken passen nicht zu ihren Gemüthsgedanken, ihre Amtsgedanken nicht zu ihren Wissenschaftsgedanken, ihre Fassaden nicht zu ihren Hintertreppen, ihre Geschäfte nicht zu ihrem Temperament, ihre Öffentlichkeit nicht zu ihrem Privatleben' (W31 158).

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<sup>8</sup> Robert Musil, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. by Adolf Frisé, 9 vols (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978), I, 34.

Insights such as these not only anticipate developments in sociology and psychology,<sup>9</sup> they also put into a social context the doubts about the self that had been expressed by Musil's mentor Ernst Mach in *Die Analyse der Empfindungen* (1886), a work which gave scientific confirmation to the so-called 'impressionist' world-view that dominated Austrian literature in the 1890s. A physicist and philosopher, Mach posited a world composed not of objective matter and of subjective impressions but wholly of neutral elements called sensations or 'Empfindungen'. It was effectively *Schein* without *Sein*: under the heading 'Antimetaphysische Vorbemerkungen' Mach stated unequivocally that his theories rendered obsolete the traditional dualism by attributing the same status to both.<sup>10</sup> The physical world was assumed to exist only as it impinged on the senses from moment to moment and the self also lost its fixed contours, instead becoming an everchanging compound of mood and atmosphere. Mach realized that his theories had far-reaching consequences for psychology and summed them up in the sentence: 'Das Ich ist unrettbar.'<sup>11</sup> Mach's theories, which were popularized by Hermann Bahr in 'Das unrettbare Ich' (1904), are remarkably consistent with the way in which Bahr had earlier summed up the outlook of the 1890s: 'Die Sensationen allein sind Wahrheit, zuverlässige und unwiderlegliche Wahrheit; das Ich ist immer schon Konstruktion.'<sup>12</sup> If one takes this as a credo, then the only appropriate life-style is one which sets out to be wholly discontinuous, eschews moral values requiring constancy, embraces contradiction, and subordinates all other demands to the mood of the moment. The image of the actor, forever slipping into another new role, naturally suggests itself to express this situation.

As will be shown in Chapter Two, this new way of understanding the instability of the psyche was easily compatible with the essential theatricality of the creative imagination as Hofmannsthal saw it and helped him to understand the forces which threatened that creativity. Theatrical metaphors indeed fit remarkably well with the aestheticism of the 1890s, with that quest for moments of heightened experience, that cultivation of the inner life and of the artistic sensibility for which Hofmannsthal and his generation were famous.

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<sup>9</sup> The passage from *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* reproduced above is, for example, quoted with admiration in Ralf Dahrendorf, *Homo Sociologicus* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 56

<sup>10</sup> Ernst Mach, *Die Analyse der Empfindungen und das Verhältnis des Physischen zum Psychischen* 9th edn (Jena: G. Fischer, 1922; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1987), pp. 8–9

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>12</sup> Hermann Bahr, *Zur Überwindung des Naturalismus: Theoretische Schriften 1887–1904*, ed. b. Gotthart Wunberg (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1968), p. 84.

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Perhaps the most striking depiction of the aesthete as actor is Schnitzler's cycle of *Anatol* plays (1888–91) and Hofmannsthal's prologue to that cycle:

Also spielen wir Theater,  
Spielen uns're eig'nen Stücke,  
Frühgereift und zart und traurig,  
Die Komödie uns'rer Seele,  
Uns'res Fühlens Heut' und Gestern,  
Böser Dinge hübsche Formel,  
Glatte Worte, bunte Bilder  
Halbes, heimliches Empfinden,  
Agonien, Episoden ... (W1 25)

The image presented is of precocious young men and women investing their emotional energy in art and in stage-managing their lives before they have had the opportunity to discover the real world or find more worthy outlets for their originality. The aesthetic pleasure they derive from manipulating their feelings is tinged with a sadness that they may be making themselves temperamentally unsuited to achieve genuine creativity or to play a part on the public stage, that to be above what is mundane is also to be outside what is most human. The fine words and bright images masking unhappy and possibly sordid realities point to an element of unease which is present both in the *Anatol* plays and in many of Hofmannsthal's lyrical dramas.

### *Transformations of the Baroque*

The prominence of theatrical metaphors in Austrian literature towards 1900 has often been attributed to the continuing influence of Austria's Baroque traditions which are said to have lived on in the popular drama of the early nineteenth century and to have been fostered by the continuity of the Habsburg Empire. Wolfgang Nehring, for example, maintains that Austrian impressionism was simply 'eine Art säkularisiertes Barock'.<sup>13</sup> Certainly, many themes of Baroque literature are restated at this period, in particular the confusion of *Sein* and *Schein*, of dream and reality, and the idea of life as theatre; but one must be wary of conflating a number of issues concerning the nature of Austrian

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<sup>13</sup> Wolfgang Nehring, 'Hofmannsthal und der österreichische Impressionismus', *Hofmannsthal-Forschungen*, 2 (1974), 57–72 (p. 70).

traditionalism, the uses to which it was put (in both the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries), and the particular and urgent modernity of Austrian culture around 1900.

One would do well to recall two factors: firstly, that the *theatrum mundi* topos was universally available in the late nineteenth century: the writers of 'Jung Wien' had, almost without exception, benefited from a classical education, were widely read in European literature and, far from being culturally isolated, were well aware of broader European trends. Secondly, one must take account of the politicized nature of the Baroque as a concept in Austrian literary history, of the fact that the supposed continuity of Austrian or Austro-Bavarian (as opposed to German) traditions has been used to provide a cultural identity distinct from both Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany and, albeit with certain reservations, to rebuild it after 1945.

Over-emphasis on the Baroque tends to impose a false homogeneity, both on the work of individual writers and on the larger cultural picture. Gerhart Baumann, for example, has argued vehemently that Hofmannsthal shared with Grillparzer an 'österreichische Geistesverfassung' in which a sense of the world as a theatre was a vital component; but Baumann's method of argument is too allusive to address the full complexity of the subject, not least because he makes little distinction between Hofmannsthal's earlier and later works.<sup>14</sup> To illustrate my point, Hofmannsthal's initial fascination with theatrical metaphors was inseparable from a somewhat sentimental image of Viennese culture, which in 1896 he described thus:

Eine künstlerische Kultur: Menschen, die ihre Beziehungen so wie Landschaften genießen und ihre Vergangenheiten wie Gärten und ihre Geschicke wie Schauspiele. Eine heitere Kultur: Menschen, deren Anstand ihnen gebietet, der Schwere der Welt entgegenzulächeln. Eine literarische Kultur: Menschen, die es lieben, zu reden, Menschen, Künstler, denen das Schauspiel viel bedeutet. (RA2 227)

For the young writer this aesthetic sophistication was not, however, part of a politicized cultural vision; that came much later, when the collapse of the Empire encouraged him to accommodate his image of the Viennese to a nostalgic 'Habsburg myth'.<sup>15</sup> There is, indeed, a striking contrast between the

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<sup>14</sup> Gerhart Baumann, *Franz Grillparzer: Dichtung und österreichische Geistesverfassung* (Frankfurt a.M.: Athenäum, 1966), especially pp. 156–91.

<sup>15</sup> See Claudio Magris, *Der habsburgische Mythos in der österreichischen Literatur* (Salzburg: Otto Müller, 1966).

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passage quoted above and the essay "'Denkmäler des Theaters'" (1924) where the theatricality of Viennese culture becomes essentially public rather than private, a Baroque tradition kept alive not by the cultured tastes of the city's inhabitants but by the pageantry associated with the Catholic Church and the Habsburg dynasty: 'Hier in Wien, im Schatten der Kaiserburg und des Stefansdomes, hat sich von diesen Feierlichkeiten am meisten gehalten, und unter einer ganz naiven, auf reiner Festfreude, reinem Theatersinn ruhenden Teilnahme der ganzen Bevölkerung' (RA2 325). Events such as the annual Corpus Christi procession were no doubt impressive, but ordinary people could only watch passively; and whereas Hofmannsthal had previously assumed psychological complexity, in the postwar period this gives way to a mythical naivety.

"'Denkmäler des Theaters'" also rehearses precisely the same cultural cliché which informs the argument of Nehring and Baumann: 'in jener älteren Welt, die wir die mittelalterliche nennen, die aber in ihrer verjüngten Form, der des Barock, bis an die Schwelle des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts reichte, ja noch durch dieses hindurch, bis in unsere, der heute Lebenden, eigene Jugend, war alles ein Schauspiel' (RA2 325). Allied to this is the belief that, from the seventeenth century onwards, Austria maintained a lively theatrical culture underpinned by the Baroque idea of *Welttheater*. Continuing the tradition established by Nadler and Rommel, the Catholic commentator Roger Bauer argues forcefully that this continued to shape Austrian drama well into the nineteenth century:

Depuis les 'ludi caesarei' des Jésuites jusqu'aux tragédies de Grillparzer, le théâtre autrichien reste ainsi fidèle à sa vocation métaphysique. Il reste à double dimension, humaine et surnaturelle. Il reste un théâtre cosmique. Du 'baroque' jusqu'au 'Biedermeier', la littérature autrichienne repose sur une même idée fondamentale, celle de création ou d'ordre universel voulu par Dieu. Même quand les poètes autrichiens n'ont plus la force, l'assurance intérieure nécessaire pour glorifier et magnifier cet ordre, ils continuent à le proclamer, parfois désespérément, c'est-à-dire tragiquement.<sup>16</sup>

However, the tradition of world theatre with a strong visual element, which Bauer associates with the Burgtheater, had given way in the mid-nineteenth century to a predilection for elegant conversation plays, such as those of Eduard von Bauernfeld; the theatre thus became a social paradigm rather than

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<sup>16</sup> Roger Bauer, *La Réalité Royaume de Dieu: Études sur l'originalité du théâtre viennois dans la première moitié du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Munich: Hueber, 1965), pp. 33–34.

a theological model, its message an aesthetic rather than a moral or religious one.<sup>17</sup> Hermann Bahr was one of many turn-of-the-century writers who testified to this. In 1907 he wrote:

Das ist es auch, was ihn [den Wiener] ins Theater zieht. Hier will er erfahren, wie man sich benimmt. Im Gemeinen und im Edlen gilt das. Der eine sieht dem Fichtner oder dem Sonnenthal ab, wie man sich im Salon zu bewegen, den Hut zu tragen, den Stock zu halten hat; die Wiener Eleganz wird immer aus dem Burgtheater bezogen. Der andere horcht hin, wie zu fühlen vornehm ist. Der Wiener braucht immer ein Beispiel. Dazu geht er ins Theater. Es ist kein Abbild des Lebens. Das Leben ist sein Nachbild.<sup>18</sup>

However, it is typical of the subsequent politicization of the theatre in Austria that in *Burgtheater* (1920) Bahr put aside questions of etiquette to argue that, although Vienna's representative institution was established as a form of Josephinist opposition to the Baroque, it achieved most when it contributed to the country's great tradition.

In the first of his 'Wiener Briefe' (1922), letters written for the American journal *The Dial*, Hofmannsthal hovers between the two interpretations: the work of his contemporary Arthur Schnitzler epitomizes the Burgtheater tradition of the *Konversationsstück* by revolving around 'das "Theater" als Symbol, das "Theater", welches alle Lebenden, indem sie sich voreinander zur Schau stellen, einander wechselweise bereiten, die Komödie der Worte, der Gebärden und der sozialen Handlungen, die großen und kleinen Szenen, mit denen man einander in der Liebschaft wie im Salon oder in der Politik aufwartet ...' (RA2 275). However, he asserts in the same essay that the other strength of the Viennese theatrical tradition is that it has always included every element of society 'und eine Welt in allen Farben des Regenbogens aufrollte, die wie die Welt Shakespeares oder Calderons den König, das oberste Element, ja über ihn hinaus den Heiligen, den Engel oder die Fee ebenso in sich faßte wie den burlesken Handwerker, Eseltreiber, Koch oder Sesselträger' (RA2 278). The delusions and deceptions of social role-play co-exist with the grand allegorical sweep of the Baroque tradition; but while, for the mature Hofmannsthal, even social comedy was ultimately to acquire an allegorical dimension,

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<sup>17</sup> For further discussion see Edward Timms, 'The Theatre as a Social Paradigm', *Karl Kraus — Apocalyptic Satirist: Culture and Catastrophe in Habsburg Vienna* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 22–28; and W.E. Yates, *Theatre in Vienna: A Critical History, 1776–1995* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 49–64.

<sup>18</sup> Hermann Bahr, *Wien* (Stuttgart: Krabbe, 1907), p. 73; *Burgtheater* (Vienna and Berlin: Wiener literarische Anstalt, 1920).

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there were good historical reasons why the younger writer was more interested in role-play for its own sake.

However warily one views the Baroque issue, there can be no doubt that the late nineteenth century saw the development throughout Europe of a mania for theatre. Fuelled, in philosophical terms, by Nietzsche's critique of the mimic instinct (a topic brought to Hofmannsthal's attention by Alfred von Berger), it was taken up with alacrity in Austria and, there as elsewhere, focused to a large extent on the personality and performance styles of individual actors. They were idolized and imitated, both for their social panache and, as is demonstrated by Hofmannsthal's essays on Eleonora Duse and his valedictory poems for the Burgtheater actors Friedrich Mitterwurzer, Hermann Müller and Josef Kainz, for their magical ability to transform themselves with every new role — a capacity which of course has profound psychological implications. As Meyhöfer has demonstrated, it was natural in this cultural climate that the actor should become 'eine Reflexions- und Orientierungsfigur' in many literary works, with notions of role-play also helping, through the work of Georg Simmel, to shape the embryonic discipline of sociology.<sup>19</sup>

Although the European perspective is a valuable one, the motif of the actor, on which Meyhöfer's study focuses, does not provide a sufficient framework within which to discuss many works of Austrian literature in which it is prominent.<sup>20</sup> Writers such as Hofmannsthal and Schnitzler were fascinated by the mutability of the modern psyche but disturbed by the lack of self-knowledge and social responsibility which it encouraged. They therefore played off the individual's propensity for role-play against traditional notions of *Welttheater*, often drawing on the medieval and Baroque heritage in order to set the aesthete's stylization of life and refusal to take it more seriously than he would a stage-play against the inescapable realities of mortality and death. Although neither the 'impressionist' world-view nor that of the aesthete had a necessary metaphysical dimension, they both tended to give rise to subjective and miniaturized world theatres which could then be set alongside more traditional models for purposes of criticism and comparison. Figures who effectively create the world anew by seeing it with different eyes and re-invent

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<sup>19</sup> Annette Meyhöfer, *Das Motiv des Schauspielers in der Literatur der Jahrhundertwende*, Kölner germanistische Studien, 27 (Cologne: Böhlau, 1989), p. 46.

<sup>20</sup> Meyhöfer's study brings together drama and prose fiction from both Germany and Austria. Due to her broad focus, a section devoted to 'Hofmannsthal's ästhetizistisches *theatrum mundi*' (pp. 120–39) does little more than outline recurrent psychological traits of the characters in his lyrical dramas and draws few parallels with the other writers discussed.

themselves in the process are not just actors: they presume to usurp the privilege of the Almighty. Hofmannsthal captures the essence of this when he writes of d'Annunzio and his work: 'man fand den Begriff des Schwebens über dem Leben als Regisseur und Zuschauer des großen Schauspiels verlockender als den des Darinstehens als mithandelnde Gestalt' (RA1 178–79). This produces works of literature which indeed restate time-honoured, sometimes characteristically Baroque themes, and yet are intensely modern in their preoccupations.

Schnitzler's work illustrates this most clearly insofar as he frequently draws on traditional forms of *Welttheater* but uses them as a starting-point for essentially modern re-interpretations. Most famously, he models *Reigen* on the late medieval Dance of Death.<sup>21</sup> Death as the great leveller is replaced by the sexual act as the point at which all are equal; as the participants fall silent at the climax of each scene, the facade of euphemisms, veiled coercion and tentative fore-play is finally stripped away. Furthermore, if one reads *Reigen* partly as a metaphor for the transmission of sexual diseases, many of which were still incurable around 1900, the constant threat of infection mirrors the fear of plague which gives the late medieval *Totentanz* its force.<sup>22</sup>

The plots of Schnitzler's plays frequently revolve around the scenario of a figure or figures who refuse to think beyond the present being confronted with the ineluctable reality of death. As the final scene in the play of life, the Dance of Death is the part of the *theatrum mundi* which can most easily be liberated from theology. One dies not because one is Christian but because one is mortal. In *Die letzten Masken* (1902) Schnitzler uses the unpleasantly realistic setting of a ward for the terminally ill: the dying journalist Rademacher rehearses the speech that will allow him to settle an old score in front of the actor Florian Jackwerth. Whereas the latter, ignorant of his condition, remains 'ein armer Teufel von Schauspieler', Rademacher realizes the senselessness of destroying another's life when his only gain is a moment of stage-managed pleasure.<sup>23</sup> The highpoint of *Liebelei* (1894) is likewise a confrontation with death: in a supremely theatrical scene reminiscent of

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<sup>21</sup> A useful study of this genre is Uwe Pörksen, 'Der Totentanz des Spätmittelalters und sein Wiederaufleben im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert: Vorüberlegungen zu einer Rezeptionsgeschichte als Rezeptionskritik', in *Mittelalter-Rezeption: Ein Symposium*, ed. by Peter Wapnewski (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1986), pp. 245–62.

<sup>22</sup> The fear of sexually transmitted diseases is mentioned both by Schnitzler in *Jugend in Wien* (published 1968) and by Stefan Zweig in *Die Welt von Gestern* (1941).

<sup>23</sup> Arthur Schnitzler, *Die dramatischen Werke*, 2 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1962), I, 733.

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Mozart's *Don Giovanni* Death comes to the philandering Fritz Lobheimer in the form of a wronged husband challenging him to a duel and interrupts an evening of dalliance with two lower-class girls. Also central to Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann*, the motif of the interrupted feast clearly has its origins in the Baroque, but Schnitzler's concern is not with religious perspectives or systems of morality: what interests him is the young man's subsequent behaviour, which combines a morbid fatalism with a frantic desire to seize the moment.

Schnitzler's later play *Der einsame Weg* (1904) provides a modern treatment of another aspect of Everyman's fate, his final journey. The aesthete Stefan von Sala, aged forty-five, plans to join an archaeological expedition from which, since he suffers from a heart condition, he is unlikely to return. The prospect of unearthing treasures which have withstood the ravages of time offers a symbolic victory over his own mortality, and he searches for a younger person to accompany him. The title *Der einsame Weg* and the play's atmosphere, which owes a debt both to Maeterlinck and to Ibsen's *When We Dead Awaken* (1899), suggest that not just Sala but every character is on that lonely road to dusty death. Although the universality of death, and indeed of the *theatrum mundi* topos as a whole, invites the monumental, timeless approach, Schnitzler shows that the subject can be treated in a modern setting. By using a collection of characters with differing attitudes, he is able to achieve subtlety without making explicit moral judgements.

A poignant commentary on the fate of ageing aesthetes and adventurers is provided by a painting entitled 'Schauspielerin' which Sala discusses with his prospective companion, Felix, in the first act of *Der einsame Weg*:

SALA [...] Ein junges Weib in einem Harlekinskostüm, darüber eine griechische Toga geworfen, ihr zu Füßen ein Gewirr von Masken. Ganz allein, den starren Blick auf den Zuschauerraum gerichtet, steht sie auf einer leeren, halb dunkeln Bühne, zwischen Kulissen, die nicht zueinander passen. Ein Stück Zimmerwand, ein Stück Wald, ein Stück Burgverließ...

FELIX Und der Hintergrund stellt eine Landschaft im Süden vor, mit Palmen und Platanen...?

SALA Ja. Die halb aufgerollt ist, so daß man weiter rückwärts einen Haufen von Möbeln, Stufen, Bechern, Kronen im hellen Tageslicht schimmern sieht.<sup>24</sup>

Figures who have made their lives into a series of discontinuous episodes are ultimately left with an eventful but unsatisfying past, an incoherent identity in

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<sup>24</sup> Schnitzler, *Die dramatischen Werke*, I, 770.

the present, and a frighteningly bleak future. This is very similar to the situation of Claudio at the opening of *Der Tor und der Tod*, Hofmannsthal's 'seltsame gereimte / Kleine Todtentanzcomödie' (W3 246). The clutter of Claudio's study, a 'Chaos toter Sachen' (W3 72), resembles the discarded props and scenery of the painting, and the metatheatrical interlude introduced by Death reveals that he too has a trail of selfishly abandoned roles behind him, including those of son, lover and friend.

Hofmannsthal's use of theatrical metaphors in *Der Tor und der Tod* has been discussed at length by Hinrich Seeba who argues that, in comparison to the self-exonerating image of life as an incomprehensible book, which Claudio uses in the early part of the playlet, his realization that he was a bad actor is a marked improvement.<sup>25</sup> For a brief moment he accepts responsibility for the unhappiness he has caused to himself and others:

Wie auf der Bühne' ein schlechter Komödiant  
Aufs Stichwort kommt er, red't sein Teil und geht  
Gleichgültig gegen alles andre, stumpf,  
Vom Klang der eignen Stimme ungerührt  
Und hohlen Tones andre rührend nicht:  
So über diese Lebensbühne hin  
Bin ich gegangen ohne Kraft und Wert. (W3 78)

Claudio is, however, incapable of seeing how he should have behaved and instead makes the revealed theatricality of his past existence an excuse to reject the whole notion of the *theatrum mundi*, and with it the authority of Death. He only expires once he has transposed the terms 'life' and 'death', and imagines himself once again an excited adolescent with his whole life ahead of him.

Although, as Alewyn points out, Claudio's literary ancestors are legion, *Der Tor und der Tod* owes a great deal to Goethe's *Faust*.<sup>26</sup> Hofmannsthal, who told his friend Karg that he knew the text 'seitenweise auswendig' and admired it 'wie nichts zweites',<sup>27</sup> clearly uses it as the model for Claudio's rebellion against the limits of his humanity and of a historicist culture. The opening monologue, Claudio's situation at the start of the play, and the description of

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<sup>25</sup> Hinrich C. Seeba, *Kritik des ästhetischen Menschen: Hermeneutik und Moral in Hofmannsthal's 'Der Tor und der Tod'* (Bad Homburg: Gehlen, 1970), especially pp. 133–47.

<sup>26</sup> Richard Alewyn, 'Der Tod des Ästheten', in Alewyn, *Über Hugo von Hofmannsthal*, 4th edn (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), pp. 64–77 (pp. 64–65).

<sup>27</sup> Hugo von Hofmannsthal – Edgar Karg von Bebenburg, *Briefwechsel*, ed. by Mary E. Gilbert (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1966), p. 24: Hofmannsthal to Karg, 7 February 1893.

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his study all help to identify him as a latter-day Faust. In both texts a frustrated intellectual who has reached middle age regrets that what he has acquired, academic knowledge in Faust's case, beautiful possessions in *Der Tor und der Tod*, has not brought him happiness and fulfilment. The motif of 'Sehnsucht' therefore remains prominent: nature is set against academic and aesthetic culture as Faust longs to follow the moon and Claudio the setting sun. The 'Urväter-Hausrat' which Faust found so depressing has been replaced by a dusty collection of *objets d'art* which make Claudio's study a 'Museum' both in the original and in the modern sense of the word. The objects mentioned individually indeed underline the barrenness of Claudio's life: he contemplates an ivory crucifix not because he follows Christ's teachings but to admire the workmanship; the enigmatic smile of the Mona Lisa has robbed him of the joy and warmth of human love. Like Faust, Claudio is a representative figure: 'Als gebildeter, von Kunst und Altertümern umgebener Spätling ist er zugleich für den romantisch müden aristokratischen Ästhetizismus eine Art Phänotyp der Epoche'.<sup>28</sup> As part of a late generation, his material existence has outstripped his ability to give meaning to it.

Goethe's *Weltgedicht*, from which Hofmannsthal repeatedly drew inspiration, confronts the cosmology of medieval Christianity with the demands of modern individualism and consequently brings about a complex revision of those medieval ideas. Discussion of *Jedermann* and of *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* will show that, despite his predilection for medieval and Baroque models, Hofmannsthal cannot conceive of a world theatre which does not to some extent accommodate Faustian individualism. This qualified traditionalism, which has important moral and aesthetic implications, contrasts markedly with the stance of Richard von Kralik, who attempted with *Das Volksschauspiel vom Doktor Faust* (1895) to restore the Faust legend to its pre-Goethean form and later made the appeal, 'der Faustkultur eine Gralkultur entgegenzustellen, der Zerstörung unseres Volks- und Kulturlebens durch dessen Erneuerung entgegenzutreten'.<sup>29</sup>

What Boyle writes about Faust applies equally to Claudio: 'there is none in whose hands he will acknowledge the power over his death and his life to lie

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<sup>28</sup> Pörksen, 'Der Totentanz des Spätmittelalters und sein Wiederaufleben im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert', p. 253.

<sup>29</sup> Richard von Kralik, *Die Gralsage* (Ravensburg: Alber, 1907), p. xiv.

— none, that is, to whom he relinquishes the structuring of his experience.<sup>30</sup> Hofmannsthal not only allows him to refuse this acknowledgement but ends the playlet on a note of admiration for Claudio:

Wie wundervoll sind diese Wesen,  
Die, was nicht deutbar, dennoch deuten,  
Was nie geschrieben wurde, lesen,  
Verworrenes beherrschend binden  
Und Wege noch im Ewig-Dunkeln finden. (W3 79–80)

This respect for the creativity of the human mind, however perverse a form it takes, provides a basis on which to evaluate Claudio's failings — not in conventional moral terms, but judging him by his own claim to autonomy. What is demanded of modern man is explained by Death:

Im Innern quillt euch allen treu ein Geist,  
Der diesem Chaos toter Sachen  
Beziehung einzuhauchen heißt,  
Und euren Garten draus zu machen  
Für Wirksamkeit, Beglückung und Verdruß. (W3 72)

The basic point is that, banished from the Garden of Eden, each individual is obliged to make a garden of his own, to exercise his creativity, even in the chaos of a late culture. As the verb 'einhauchen' suggests, this is a necessary, life-giving process, a small-scale re-enactment of the divine work of creation. While six days' toil gave rise to the great theatre of the world, the product of Man's labours is a private world theatre, which can be as fanciful or as mundane as he chooses; but if it proves uninhabitable, that is his responsibility and his alone.

The demanding and problematic endeavour of the *Lebenskünstler* is also that of the creative artist. As I shall argue in Chapter Two, this is nowhere clearer than in *Das kleine Welttheater* where Hofmannsthal himself is, as it were, building a garden. The later lyrical drama has in common with *Der Tor und der Tod* that Hofmannsthal asserts the sovereignty of his poetic universe by defining its parameters in conscious opposition to conventional notions of *Welttheater*. However, whereas Claudio rejects role-play as unsatisfying and lacking in emotional intensity, the notion of man as actor is central to

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<sup>30</sup> Nicholas Boyle, *Goethe: The Poet and the Age* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), I, 228.

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Hofmannsthal's poetics; and he demonstrates that, although the fragmentation of the 'impressionist' personality and the theatricality of the aesthete's self-stylization necessarily threaten the creative imagination and travesty the childlike capacity for role-play from which it stems, both phenomena can be productively harnessed.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE SELF AS UNIVERSE: AESTHETES, ARTISTS, AND CHILDREN

*Drüben schreiten Bauern hinab  
haben ein Leben, das ich nie gekannt  
und wissen nicht darum  
ich träume ihr Leben wie sie's nie gelebt  
bäurisch verkleidet  
o Kinderzeit, die Anteil hat an der ganzen Welt! (RA3 434)*

A young child watches farmers going about their work and amuses himself by imagining what life in their shoes might be like. The youngster is able to picture himself playing different roles because he retains the narcissistic belief that he is vitally connected to everything and everyone around him. This is not, however, a simple *Rollengedicht*, for the *Ich* of these lines is Hofmannsthal himself, who has been reading outside on a summer's day (21 August 1901) and describes his daydreams as 'Schicksal hervorzurufen, daran ich Anteil habe, ahnend schauernd, lieblich freundlich' (RA3 434). The creative affinity of child and poet, a Romantic notion which gained wide currency in the nineteenth century, indeed had profound personal relevance for Hofmannsthal. Infusing it with modern psychological concerns, he saw the child's boundless subjectivity and its talent for imaginative role-play as the basis of all artistic creativity, but was at the same time aware that the intensity of childhood make-believe had a potential to blight later development by fostering a sterile aestheticism and a passion for manipulating one's emotions, a hint of which is even glimpsed in the juxtaposition of 'ahnend schauernd, lieblich freundlich'.

Child, aesthete and poet are linked together in Hofmannsthal's early work by the notion of 'Das Ich als Universum' (RA3 599): all three, not just the aesthete, are 'Menschen, die von der Phantasie und für die Phantasie leben' (RA1 196); creating a world around themselves, they enhance their enjoyment of it by means of imaginative role-play. Hofmannsthal's fascination with this phenomenon creates a complex interrelation between his image of childhood, his depiction of the creative imagination, and his insights into the contemporary vogue for aestheticism; the psychological experiments of an eight-year-old in

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'Age of Innocence' (1891) mesh in unexpected ways with the sophisticated posturing of Claudio in *Der Tor und der Tod* and with the exuberant subjectivity of the creative artist, as depicted in Hofmannsthal's early essayistic prose; and in *Das kleine Welttheater*, to be analysed in the final section of this chapter, Hofmannsthal displays the world of the poet's imagination in the form of an allegorical revue; alluding playfully to Calderón, he offers a glimpse of its origins, of its richness, and of the dangers which threaten it.

### *Childhood and Theatricality*

Hofmannsthal's treatment of the theme of childhood both draws on established cultural images and contributes to their revision. Most important is the idea of the child as a charismatic model for the adult world and of early life as a peak rather than a prelude. This had long had a place in Christian teaching, in hermetic and Neo-Platonic thought; and it established itself as an ideal in German aesthetics when Schiller wrote in *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*, 'Sie sind, was wir waren; sie sind, was wir wieder werden sollen'.<sup>1</sup> That a return to past naivety might be achieved by freely exercising one's reason became a hope for the future. The ideological function of childhood, as representing nature rather than culture, reached its peak with Rousseau, while the German Romantics, especially Novalis and Tieck, shifted the emphasis from anthropology to metaphysics. In a view strongly influenced by Neo-Platonism, childhood became a mystical state of oneness with the Godhead, maturation a process of estrangement. Reacting against Enlightenment values, the Romantics also admired the child's spontaneity and freshness of vision, and looked for these qualities in the creative artist. With the maxim, 'Wo Kinder sind, da ist ein goldnes Zeitalter', Novalis summed up the desire to return German literature to its cultural roots, and German society

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<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Schiller, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Gerhard Fricke and Herbert G. Göpfert, 5 vols (Munich: Hanser, 1958–59), V, 695: italics in original. This account draws on the following: Aleida Assmann, 'Werden was wir waren: Anmerkungen zur Geschichte der Kindheitsidee', *Antike und Abendland*, 24 (1978), 98–124; Hans-Heino Ewers, *Kindheit als poetische Daseinsform: Studien zur Entstehung der romantischen Kindheitsutopie im 18. Jahrhundert: Herder, Jean Paul, Novalis und Tieck* (Munich: Fink, 1989); Reinhard Kuhn, *Corruption in Paradise: The Child in Western Literature* (Hanover, NH and London: University Press of New England, for Brown University Press, 1982).

to a more organic form.<sup>2</sup> Hofmannsthal expresses similar sentiments in characterizing the effects of historicism on his own generation: 'In künstlichen, an Erinnerung reichen Zeiten sammeln sich die Lebendigen an den Altären der kindlichen Götter. Sich als Kinder zu fühlen, als Kinder zu betragen, ist die rührende Kunst reifer Menschen' (RA1 228).

What the young Hofmannsthal took most strikingly from the Romantic tradition was the link between child and poet. As early as the prologue to *Der Tod des Tizian* (1892) he suggests that the child is the poet's 'Zwillingsbruder' (W3 40): sharing a narcissistic self-absorption and a fertile imagination, both have what Hofmannsthal described in 1916 as a 'Gabe sich zu vervielfältigen' (RA3 599). While the poet employs this in creating the figures of the lyrical drama itself, the young page of the prologue, fascinated by the portrait of a dead Infante, imitates his pose, prompting the poet to address him as 'Schauspieler deiner selbstgeschaffnen Träume' (W3 39). That Hofmannsthal set considerable store by this phrase is evident from the fact that it reappears in 1901, in the study of Victor Hugo that was to have been his *Habilitationschrift*. Investigating the sources of Hugo's vivid imagination, Hofmannsthal turns back to his childhood, spent first in Italy during the Napoleonic occupation, and then in Spain. The French child in Spain is an outsider to its flamboyant Catholic culture but, as a representative of the conquering nation, is not obliged to feel inferior to it. This strange situation combines with Hugo's sensitivity to give the Spanish experience an aura of dreamlike unreality: 'Welche Nahrung für den gärenden Geist eines Knaben! Sich hineinzuträumen in diese gebietenden Gestalten, die Säle und Galerien in einer pompösen Haltung zu durchschreiten, den Arm in die Hüfte gestemmt, ein Schauspieler selbstgeschaffener Träume' (RA1 251). Stimulated by his unfamiliar environment, the child acts out imagined scenarios, and in so doing discovers his talent for creating characters appropriate to a Romantic backdrop.

Whereas in older literature children primarily fulfilled an ideological function, Hofmannsthal's generation began to be interested in them as flesh-and-blood people and to infuse the cultural myths with modern psychological and sociological concerns. In Frank Wedekind's 'Kindertragödie' *Frühlings Erwachen*, completed in the same year as 'Age of Innocence' (1891), it is not just the portrait of adolescent sexuality which undermines the myth of childhood innocence; by showing that the young people are acutely aware of

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<sup>2</sup> Novalis, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. by Carl Seelig, 5 vols (Zurich: Bühl, 1945), II, 35.

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themselves as players of roles Wedekind attacks one of the most cherished beliefs of the nineteenth century, namely that children are untouched by adult self-consciousness. That Ibsen's Hedda Gabler arranges her death in the grand theatrical manner is well known; in 'Die Menschen in Ibsens Dramen' Hofmannsthal points out the less familiar fact that the fourteen-year-old Hedvig Ekdal in *The Wild Duck* does much the same (RA1 153).

In nineteenth-century fiction dying children often appear as illuminated presences, endowed with a special wholeness because they, unlike those who live a full life, will not grow old and guileful. Not so the ghastly little girls in the second of Hofmannsthal's 'Terzinen' (1894). Big, staring eyes, pale faces and a perpetual chill all give the hint that their life is ebbing away into nature. The speaker realizes this and so do the girls themselves. Fear gives way to a macabre aestheticism, as they mimic that look of combined agony and ecstasy which is the stock-in-trade of medieval hagiography.

Wie kleine Mädchen, die sehr blass aussehen,  
Mit grossen Augen, und die immer frieren,  
An einem Abend stumm vor sich hinsehn

Und wissen, dass das Leben jetzt aus ihren  
Schlaftrunk'nen Gliedern still hinüberfließt  
In Bäum' und Gras, und sich matt lächelnd zieren,

Wie eine Heilige die ihr Blut vergiesst. (W1 49)

Hofmannsthal ensures that his reader appreciates the full horror of their affected self-consciousness by setting the verb 'sich zieren' at the end of the penultimate line and leaving the simile emphatically isolated. Whereas a novel such as Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841) is the effigy of its transfigured heroine, the children of the 1890s insist on creating the effect for themselves.<sup>3</sup>

Hofmannsthal's iconoclastic treatment of childhood has features in common with the work of Sigmund Freud, insofar as both looked back to childhood in order to understand the sources of adult behaviour. While in 'Age of Innocence' Hofmannsthal presented the dissolution of the stable personality and

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<sup>3</sup> On images of children in Victorian culture see Nina Auerbach, *Private Theatricals: The Lives of the Victorians* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1990), especially pp. 21–51.

the associated propensity for role-play as a pathological disorder, the beginnings of which were already discernible in the behaviour of an eight-year-old boy, Freud discovered that neuroses, such as those which he and Breuer had identified in their *Studien über Hysterie* (1895), were frequently rooted in early childhood experience and were a defence mechanism against remembering a disturbing, usually sexual experience. Reluctant to believe that the tales of child abuse which subsequent analyses produced were literally true, Freud concluded in 1897 that these tales were recollections of infantile fantasies. As such, they bore witness not only to a capacity for erotic stimulation manifesting itself at a far earlier age than had previously been thought possible but, more importantly, to the child's imaginative powers.

Consequently, psychoanalysis became above all an investigation of the imaginative world of the individual, its methods and insights overlapping significantly with those of contemporary literature. As Freud grew more and more convinced that in fantasy, dream and day-dream the mind constructs quasi-dramatic scenarios, so he made increasing use of theatrical metaphors. For example, in the brief study of the fantasy "Ein Kind wird geschlagen" (1919) he presents its successive revisions as alternative theatrical scenarios in which the fantasizing child is sometimes a spectator, sometimes the one being struck. Dealing with two specific cases, Freud writes: 'In beiden Fällen von Tagträumen — der eine erhob sich beinahe zum Niveau einer Dichtung — waren die Helden immer nur junge Männer, ja Frauen kamen in diesen Schöpfungen überhaupt nicht vor und fanden erst nach vielen Jahren in Nebenrollen Aufnahme.'<sup>4</sup> The fantasizing mind creates variations on a theme, redistributing the roles in the manner of a dramatist experimenting with possibilities.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Studienausgabe*, ed. by Alexander Mitscherlich et al., 10 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1969–75), VII, 242.

<sup>5</sup> Another important use of theatrical metaphors in Freud's work is his notion of the 'Urszene' or 'primal scene' in which the infant either observes its parents during sexual intercourse or imagines such a scenario, having perhaps seen animals mating and its parents in states of undress. See Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, The International Psycho-Analytic Library, 94, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Hogarth Press, 1973), pp. 331, 335–36. The difference between the 'Urszene' and Hofmannsthal's view of childhood role-play in the 1890s is that he thinks of the child largely as a free agent taking control of its situation, whereas for Freud everything revolves around a small number of pre-established scenarios ('primal fantasies') which the mind reworks over and over again, forming complexes which can be traced back beyond the individual to a collective childhood.

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Although there is no positive evidence that Hofmannsthal read Freud's work before 1902, he was actively interested in pre-Freudian psychology. As early as 1889 he noted: 'Das gefährliche Spiel mit der Gefahr geistiger Überreizung (Ankauf der Bücher von Lombroso, Krafft-Ebing, Interesse für Psychiatrie)' (RA3 313). This convergence of poetic insight and scientific research may be attributed in part to the intellectual climate which, in the late nineteenth century, was dominated by the scientific approach and encouraged an almost obsessive interest in the workings of the human mind, and in people's emotional and instinctual lives. The language of clinical observation is clearly discernible in Hofmannsthal's early critical essays and these, together with his lyrical dramas, build up an impressively coherent and largely independent literary psychology.<sup>6</sup>

That childhood is so prominent in Hofmannsthal's analyses of adult psychology is also due in part to his own precocity and to that which he sees as typical of his generation. Claiming wisdom beyond their years, the adolescents of the 1890s remain both childlike and childish, intensely imaginative but also incorrigibly narcissistic. Hofmannsthal conveys this most effectively in his 'Prolog zu Mimi' (1896) where he superimposes images of self-stylization and of the modern fragmented psyche on depictions of traditional childhood make-believe. *Haustheater* was a popular pastime in well-to-do families, including several with whom Hofmannsthal had contact in the 1890s,<sup>7</sup> but here the child who plays Little Bo-Peep in a mock rococo playlet gives way to the 'Kinder dieser sonderbaren Zeit' whose games are far more dangerous.

Wir haben aus dem Leben, das wir leben,  
Ein Spiel gemacht, und unsre Wahrheit gleitet  
Mit unserer Komödie durcheinander  
Wie eines Taschenspielers hohle Becher —  
Je mehr ihr hinseht, desto mehr betrogen!  
Wir geben kleine Fetzen unsres Selbst  
Für Puppenkleider. (W1 68)

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<sup>6</sup> For a study of the relations between literature and psychology in Vienna see Michael Worbs, *Nervenkunst: Literatur und Psychoanalyse im Wien der Jahrhundertwende* (Frankfurt a.M.: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1983); and for a narrower account of Freud's influence on Hofmannsthal, see Bernd Urban, *Hofmannsthal, Freud und die Psychoanalyse: Quellenkundliche Untersuchungen, Literatur und Psychologie*, 1 (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1978).

<sup>7</sup> Hofmannsthal took part in several such productions, especially in the winter 1896–97, and wrote *Was die Braut geträumt hat* to be performed in this way. See (W3 495–503).

The ideas are familiar, not least from Hofmannsthal's 'Prolog zu Anatol', and the child appears primarily as a metaphor for the precocious adolescent. However, the emphasis on play-acting as a normal childhood activity also suggests a developmental link between the child and the young adult.

Very little has been written about the nexus of themes to be discussed in this chapter. The most detailed insights have been provided by Hoppe and by Miles. Hoppe analyses 'Age of Innocence' in an attempt to define the nature of Hofmannsthal's poetic imagination and highlights 'das Verlangen nach fremden Leben'.<sup>8</sup> Whereas he uses this to introduce the argument that Hofmannsthal's lyricism is strangely impersonal, the poet's self being obscured by a smoke-screen of literary borrowings, I shall endeavour to show in my analysis of *Das kleine Welttheater* that the emphasis on role-play is the starting-point for a consciously modern redefinition of the notion of the 'poetic self'. Miles's study of the novel *Andreas* concentrates on the relationship of that work to the *Bildungsroman* tradition and brings out the importance of childhood in that context and in terms of Hofmannsthal's Neo-Platonism.<sup>9</sup> This chapter complements these insights by considering Hofmannsthal's depiction of childhood in relation to forms of adult narcissism and to the notion of the 'soul theatre', which is repeatedly glimpsed in his early work and explored in almost programmatic fashion in *Das kleine Welttheater*.

### *Patterns of Development*

*Nichts wird später in dem Manne sein, was nicht in dem Kinde war.*  
(RA1 254)

*Altkluge Kinder und unreife Greise sind in gewissen Weltzuständen  
genug da.* (RA3 245)

When Hofmannsthal read 'Age of Innocence' to Schnitzler in February 1892, the latter noted in his diary: 'Loris las mir Nm. eine psych. Studie vor, die ein Kind von 8 J. behandeln soll, aber nur ihn darstellt, wie er mit 8 Jahren durchmacht, was sonst Jünglinge von 16, die bedeutende Künstler oder

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<sup>8</sup> Manfred Hoppe, *Literatentum, Magie und Mystik im Frühwerk Hugo von Hofmannsthal* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1968), pp. 10–19 (p. 18).

<sup>9</sup> David H. Miles, *Hofmannsthal's Novel 'Andreas': Memory and Self* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972).

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Neurastheniker werden wollen.’<sup>10</sup> With this entry Schnitzler immediately identified the precocity of the central figure as that of Hofmannsthal himself. Although the narrative telescopes childhood and adolescence in a startling manner that anticipates the later ‘Prolog zu Mimi’, Schnitzler’s final remark shows that he recognized a familiar pattern of development; that such a youngster would become either a great artist or a psychological wreck, both fates being associated with the child’s propensity for imaginative role-play.

The autobiographical interpretation of ‘Age of Innocence’ commends itself, thanks to the assertion in the opening lines of the fragment that this child will become a young man of Hofmannsthal’s own generation, like him cultivating modish literary interests before he has even left school. (Hofmannsthal was aged seventeen and a pupil at Vienna’s Akademisches Gymnasium when he wrote ‘Age of Innocence’.) Schnitzler’s recognition that the eight-year-old subject may be a creative artist in the making shows greater insight, as that possibility is not directly suggested within the text itself. What Hofmannsthal emphasizes is rather the idea of the child as an embryonic aesthete: he will soon be poring over the sort of decadent French literature which Hofmannsthal reviewed in early essays and will not just model his mannerisms on the affected behaviour of actors, as many Viennese did, but ‘äußere und innere Geberden’ (W29 15). In other words, he will quickly become incapable of spontaneity, either in his physical behaviour or in his emotional life.

My objective in analysing ‘Age of Innocence’ is twofold. Firstly, I shall explore the parallels between the child’s world and that of the aesthete in *Der Tor und der Tod*. Given that Hofmannsthal is so specific in linking ‘Age of Innocence’ with the phenomenon of aestheticism, it is surprising that these parallels have received so little attention; for they not only bring the dual focus of the *puer senex* topos into sharp relief, showing that precocious youngsters and immature old men are indeed two sides of the same coin, they also add a new dimension to the argument that the adult Claudio is not wholly to blame for his misery. Secondly, I shall consider Schnitzler’s suggestion that there is a causal relationship between the child’s imaginative proclivities and the cast of mind which is characteristic of the modern artist. In order to do this, I will draw on Hofmannsthal’s accounts of two figures whom he seems to regard as representative, Peter Altenberg and Marie Bashkirtseff.

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<sup>10</sup> Arthur Schnitzler, *Tagebuch 1879–1892* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1987), p. 365.

The title of Hofmannsthal's prose fragment, 'Age of Innocence', is clearly ironic: the English story book in the text is not only written in a foreign language, but its Kate Greenaway style illustrations conjure up a world wholly alien to his eight-year-old subject. The boy knows that his appearance does not match up to the picture-book ideal of beauty; his movements are too abrupt, his manner is too impetuous. The title thus establishes that this child's development is abnormal; but at the same time Greenaway's saccharine portrait of 'normality' suggests that the received image may have lost touch with reality. One reason why the eight-year-old cannot identify with the jolly creatures romping together on the dunes is that, as an only child being brought up in a city, he is condemned to a far more lonely and confined existence. Never having played healthy outdoor games with other children, he is preoccupied by his intellectual activity and, because he spends so much time indoors, the colours of his world, physical and intellectual, are more muted and nuanced than the bold primary shades of the picture-book. Hofmannsthal's description of the precocious Marie Bashkirtseff as living 'ein Leben mit fanierten halben Farben, mit hastigen, nervösen, tausendfach gebrochenen Gedanken' (RA1 164) also applies to him.

There are many similarities between the child's situation in 'Age of Innocence' and that of Claudio in *Der Tor und der Tod*. Like the aesthete in his eclectically furnished 'Museum', the child in his nursery lives in aristocratic isolation; the one is waited on by an elderly manservant, the other by nannies and nursemaids. Both figures are self-absorbed and given to brooding; the child's apparent lack of attachment to his family and ignorance of the outside world anticipates Claudio's failure to achieve any form of social integration. Just as Claudio fills the void in his life with material possessions, so the child compensates for his loneliness and uncertainty with 'ein fieberhaftes Verlangen nach Besitz' (W29 17). Both figures also illustrate Hofmannsthal's thesis that the 'Schönheitstrieb' of the 1890s is accompanied by an 'Experimentiertrieb' (RA1 176). The 'Ewigspielender' Claudio uses other people to explore his emotional range, while psychological experimentation becomes an all-engrossing game for the child in 'Age of Innocence'. The latter case is more disturbing for, whereas Claudio has people around him whom he reduces to 'Puppen', the child plays alone, toying with his own psyche.

Just as Claudio longs for intensity of experience, so the solitary games invented by the child in 'Age of Innocence' are motivated by the primitive desire to give himself a feeling of euphoric abandonment. Kneeling in front

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of a stove, he experiments with the sensation of extreme heat; on spring evenings he leans out of his window until dizzy and light-headed; anxiety and physical discomfort become pleasurable in a manner that is hardly less disturbing than the undercurrent of sado-masochism in Wedekind's *Frühlings Erwachen*. The sort of games which children normally play in groups, daring each other to touch repellent-looking insects or snuff candles with their fingers, here become solitary occupations, through which the boy discovers the range of his emotions and the pleasure of manipulating them himself. Being thus estranged from the naive, spontaneous feelings that are supposed to be characteristic of children, the subject of 'Age of Innocence' already has an emotional sophistication akin to that of the aesthete.

Hofmannsthal depicts the eight-year-old's ceaseless quest for bigger thrills and more powerful stimulants in unmistakably Dionysian terms: he plunges a knife into a cutting-block 'in bacchantischer Zerstörungslust und athemlosem Wohlsein' and savours the emotions he manages to whip up 'wie man eine Weinbeere erst ausschlüpft und aussaugt, und dann mit den Zähnen presst und zerquetscht, bis dahin, wo ihre Süße herb und bitter wird' (W29 16).<sup>11</sup> In hoping that the Dionysian *Rausch* will provide release from lonely selfhood and relentless self-analysis, the child has a good deal in common with Claudio, and also resembles the Madman in *Das kleine Welttheater*, insofar as he too hopes for escape from his individuated personality. However, as both lyrical dramas illustrate, the only definitive escape is death, and the child's addiction to the euphoric can only lead to disappointment.

Against a background of blind and sometimes masochistic experimentation, which anticipates both Freud's concept of polymorphous perversity and the disturbing psychological experiments of Musil's *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß* (1906), the child's reading material precipitates his discovery of imaginative role-play. As Freudian analysis demonstrates very clearly, fantasies and fixations do not appear out of thin air. In "'Ein Kind wird geschlagen'" the primal fantasy is brought to consciousness by seeing corporal punishment administered at school and by reading such works as Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852).<sup>12</sup> In 'Age of Innocence' 'die historischen Erzählungen für die reifere Jugend' are the turning-point.

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<sup>11</sup> See Juliane Vogel, 'Hugo von Hofmannsthal: "Age of Innocence"', *ide: Informationen zur Deutschdidaktik*, 19, ii (1995), 110–13.

<sup>12</sup> Freud, *Studienausgabe*, VII, 231–32.

Damals bekam er die historischen Erzählungen für die reifere Jugend in die Hand. Das antiquarische Detail, die exotischen Namen, die Titel, das Costüm nahmen ihn sehr ein: er fieng an, sich in Costüm zu sehen und in costümierten Redensarten zu denken. Er genoss das seltsame Glück, seine Umgebung zu stilisieren und das Gewöhnliche als Schauspiel zu genießen. Das Erwachen kam über ihn und das Erstaunen über sich selbst und das verwunderte Sich-leben-zusehen. (W29 17)

Reading stories with a historical setting gives the child an enticing new perspective on his own existence; whereas he had previously taken for granted the permanence and solidity of the present, the way people dress, the way they speak, the way the world is structured and governed, he now sees that it is all part of a vivid historical pageant in which enactment is a fundamental principle.

The impact of this discovery is enormous. It does not just affect the child's perception of such externals as manners of speech and dress; it invades the very language of his thought so that he even begins to think 'in costümierten Redensarten'. The idea that role-play involves, or possibly starts from a loss of linguistic innocence is particularly important for Hofmannsthal who makes clear in his Mitterwurzer essay that people lose contact with their true emotions and opinions if fine words become an end in themselves: 'Wenn die Menschen schwach geworden sind und die Worte sehr stark, so siegt der gespenstische Zusammenhang der Worte über die naive Redekraft der Menschen. Sie reden dann fortwährend wie in "Rollen", in Scheingefühlen, scheinhaften Meinungen, scheinhaften Gesinnungen' (RA1 480). Claudio in *Der Tor und der Tod* is a case in point, throwing down piles of love-letters exclaiming, 'Meinst du, ich hätte je gespürt, was die — / Gespürt, was ich als Antwort schien zu sagen?!' (W3 73).

Hofmannsthal's use of the striking term 'Erwachen' identifies the access of self-consciousness as a key stage in the process of growing up. As in Wedekind's *Frühlings Erwachen*, awakening is an awakening to self, not to the self as a fully formed personality, but as a myriad of possibilities. With the advent of self-awareness in 'Age of Innocence', the child discovers countless opportunities for play-acting. Like Schnitzler's Anatol, he begins to see his environment as a theatrical decor, an immense store of imaginative stimulants:

Ein Vorhang, ein dolchartiges Messer, ein Tuch, sein eigener Körper, die Beweglichkeit seiner Mienen, die Kleider, die man an- und ausziehen kann, Lampenlicht und Halbdunkel und vollständiges Dunkel, das waren ihm die Ereignisse unzähliger Dramen oder eigentlich eines einzigen monatelangen Mysteriums. (W29 18)

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This sensitivity heightens the significance of ordinary objects, certain times of day become redolent with mystery, and momentous events always seem to be just around the corner. Initially this creates excitement and wonder; like Victor Hugo and the page in the prologue to *Der Tod des Tizian* the child becomes a 'Schauspieler selbstgeschaffener Träume', but the outcome is rather different. The child is in awe of the scenarios he is able to create, but also expects too much, succumbing to outbursts of hysteria when the outside world resists transformation.

The psychological effects become all the more disturbing when the child ceases to be content with playing ready-made roles, one at a time, and instead becomes his own one-man show, and audience too.

Er spielte und sah zu, fühlte die Schauer des Mordes und das Grauen des Opfers, weidete sich an seinen eigenen Qualen, brachte sich selbst Botschaft von sich selbst, weinte aus Rührung über seine eigene Stimme, verriet sich selbst die Geheimnisse seines Innern und erweiterte die Scala seiner Empfindlichkeiten; sein eigenes reiches Reich. (W29 18)

In this way the child cultivates 'die peinliche Geschicklichkeit, sich selbst als Object zu behandeln' (W29 18); practically schizoid, he comes to view his own emotions as if they were those of another person. What is particularly sad about this theatre of the mind is that both the actor (or actors) and the spectator in him are so enthralled by his fantasies that neither (or none) can detach himself from them. Humour and self-irony are nowhere to be seen. This is similar to Euseb in Hofmannsthal's 'Knabengeschichte' who, as he tracks the pregnant serving-girl, thinks of himself as 'ein Stadtherr [...]; zwei Frauen hatte er in sein Haus eingesperrt, und diese trieb er jetzt dazu' (W29 177) but sees nothing faintly ridiculous in this Bluebeard scenario. Such tortured and uncritical self-absorption is the clearest indicator of a sick and fragile mind, rather than a healthy, creative one.

The triumphant final words of the passage quoted above, 'sein eigenes reiches Reich' make clear that, in giving his imaginative life primacy over all other concerns, the child has indeed created a solipsistic world theatre in which he reigns supreme. The outside world only interests him for what he can make of it. As such the eight-year-old has much in common with the young aesthete Erwin in Andrian's *Der Garten der Erkenntnis* (1895) who decides 'daß er nicht in der Welt seine Stelle suchen müsse, denn er selber war die Welt,

gleich groß und gleich einzig wie sie'.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, in lines omitted from the final version of *Der Tor und der Tod* Claudio comforts himself saying, 'Blieb ich ohnmächtig so in mich gebannt, / Doch habe ich eine innre Welt gekannt' (W3 438). It is a small step from this to the arrogance of the Poet in 'Welt und Ich' (1893), who asserts the superiority of his imaginative world over the globe so arduously borne aloft by Atlas, and to Hofmannsthal's concept of 'Magie' as the coercive force by which the poet creates his own vision of existence.

Hofmannsthal singles out one summer's night as a turning-point in 'Age of Innocence'. Waking up alone in the dark for the first time, the child savours the shock of seeing his ghostly reflection in the mirror. He experiences a sense of alienation from himself and is struck by his own insubstantiality 'als ihm seine eigene weiße Gestalt aus dem Halbdunkel entgegensprang'. Puppet-like, he begins to play-act, feigning piety, 'das betende Kind', seriousness, 'der Kaiser Napoleon in Fontainebleau mit finsterer Stirne im Armsessel', and finally madness, 'der Wahnsinnige, den ihm das Fräulein einmal vorgemacht hatte, um ihn zu erschrecken, mit stieren, hervorstehenden Augen, wo man das Weiße unten sieht, und verzerrten Lippen' (W29 19). It is a practised routine which at first leaves him quivering in terror, but after a time even this ceases to be a thrill. The emotional capacity, jaded by overstimulation, fails to respond.

Going to his window, the child suddenly realizes how much there is to the world outside his nursery kingdom. Overlooking the courtyard as from a theatre balcony, he has no desire to acquaint himself with the neighbourhood; rather, like Hofmannsthal in the diary entry which serves as a motto for this chapter, he sees that he can weave his fantasies around the little he knows of other people's lives and give himself a vicarious thrill by imagining an emotional world very different from his own. 'Age of Innocence' therefore closes thus:

Er empfand plötzlich eine Sehnsucht darnach, in fremde Zimmer hineinzuschauen und fremde Menschen fühlen zu fühlen.

Die 'Anderen' hatten für ihn einen Sinn bekommen ...

Er hatte einen neuen Reiz des contemplativen Lebens entdeckt. (W29 20)

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<sup>13</sup> Leopold Andrian, *Der Garten der Erkenntnis* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1895; repr. 1970), p. 54.

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As is underlined by the formulation 'fühlen zu fühlen', the child can only be a spectator to the feelings of others and will therefore remain a stranger to his own emotional life. Even more so than Ibsen's characters, of whom Hofmannsthal writes, 'sie denken übers Denken, fühlen sich fühlen und treiben Autopsychologie', he is condemned to 'ein schattenhaftes Leben' (RA1 150).

The scenario is repeated in *Der Tor und der Tod*: a lonely individual looks out of his window and imagines what must be going on outside.

*Am Fenster stehend*

Jetzt zünden sie die Lichter an und haben

In engen Wänden eine dumpfe Welt

Mit allen Rausch- und Tränengaben

Und was noch sonst ein Herz gefangen hält. (W3 64)

Although such voyeurism is a breakthrough for the child, it as a poor substitute for genuine emotional involvement and reminds the spectator above all of what he lacks. It can hardly be a coincidence that violin music, which heralds the arrival of Death in *Der Tor und der Tod*, is also heard in 'Age of Innocence'. The awakening of the aesthetic sensibility does not necessarily lead to fulfilment.

Subtitled 'Stationen der Entwicklung', 'Age of Innocence' was the first part of a planned psychological novel of which two further, less revealing and less complete fragments were written. By stressing the child's emotional sophistication and lack of spontaneity, Hofmannsthal joins Freud and others in subverting the traditional image of childhood innocence. The many parallels between 'Age of Innocence' and *Der Tor und der Tod* seem to suggest that the fate of the sensitive individual is sealed almost before he has left the nursery: he has either established the basis of his creativity (as in the case of Victor Hugo) or made himself incapable of it. This strengthens the argument that Claudio's inability to form emotional bonds and his obsessively analytical behaviour are not culpable moral failings but a form of developmental deficiency which deserves the reader's sympathy.<sup>14</sup>

If one compares the child's behaviour in 'Age of Innocence' with Hofmannsthal's characterization of Marie Bashkirtseff, a precociously talented young artist who died, burnt out, at the age of twenty-four, one sees even more

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<sup>14</sup> This argument is made in Wolfdietrich Rasch, 'Claudio: Die Erfahrung der Lebensferne in Hofmannsthals Spiel "Der Tor und der Tod"', in Rasch, *Die literarische Décadence um 1900* (Munich: Beck, 1986), pp. 180-97.

clearly why Schnitzler thought he might be an artist in the making. In his review of Bashkirtseff's diary, entitled 'Das Tagebuch eines jungen Mädchens' (1893), Hofmannsthal depicts her as having approached life with a feverish intensity, indulging, like the child in 'Age of Innocence', in 'historische Spielereien' (RA1 166) and cultivating 'eine schwindelnde Beweglichkeit, ein Spielen mit der eigenen Persönlichkeit, eine ruhelose Lust, Stimmungen schillernd wechseln zu lassen' (RA1 165). Although this behaviour charmed her companions and fascinates Hofmannsthal, his review is nevertheless a cautionary tale. He highlights that, as with the child in 'Age of Innocence', her posturing was at base a narcissistic desire for control over herself and her environment; her unstable personality combined with her frenzied search for new and different experience to make her forever dissatisfied with her life and trying, like Claudio, to combat its apparent emptiness. However, Hofmannsthal also makes clear that the basis of Bashkirtseff's considerable artistic talent was precisely her enormous receptivity to experience and the emotional intensity with which she engaged with her surroundings. 'Sie hat die große Gabe des Erlebens, die feine und starke Resonanz für äußere Reize, in der sich Kinder und Künstler begegnen' (RA1 164). Although Bashkirtseff was to some extent a victim of herself, her art would have been a good deal poorer without her acute sensitivity to atmosphere and the proud subjectivity of her vision.

The idea that a capacity for imaginative identification bordering on neurasthenia is for Hofmannsthal the hallmark of the modern artist comes across even more strongly in the essay 'Ein neues Wiener Buch' (1896), his review of Peter Altenberg's collection of prose sketches *Wie ich es sehe* (1895). Hofmannsthal sees the volume as the private world theatre of a poet who, like Bashkirtseff in her paintings, depicts everyday scenes as they appear to him and cannot disguise his delight in the 'süßes sinnliches Schauspiel' (RA1 223) taking place around him. The authorial stance is more complex than usual because Altenberg, cultivating the image of the chameleon poet, lacks the steady perspective, instead styling himself, in Hofmannsthal's words, a 'Dichter-Schauspieler' (RA1 223). Hofmannsthal sees every aspect of *Wie ich es sehe* as being informed by the idea of man as a creature of mood and a player of roles: Altenberg narrates his little scenes through the eyes of various different personae, as well as seeing a pervading theatricality in the world he portrays.

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Es ist etwas tief Schauspielerisches in dem Buch: in den kleinen Geschichten stehen oft Menschen gegen Menschen wie in einer Rolle, ja der Dichter gegen das Leben so: er spielt sich selbst und dann und wann spielen seine Geschöpfe sich selbst. (RA1 227)

In many senses *Wie ich es sehe* makes an artform of the aesthetic voyeurism glimpsed in 'Age on Innocence' and in *Der Tor und der Tod*. Altenberg's work is informed by what Hofmannsthal terms a 'komplizierte Naivetät' (RA1 228), childlike in its wonderment and yet creating a version of the *theatrum mundi* which reflects the complexity of the modern psyche at every level.

The sensitivity with which Hofmannsthal probes Altenberg's work, his sympathy for Marie Bashkirtseff, his ability to identify with the imaginative exuberance of the child in 'Age of Innocence', and his refusal to condemn Claudio unequivocally are all to some extent a product of his own situation as a poet, wary of aestheticism but realizing that role-play was an essential and an instinctive part of his lyricism. When he sees in Ibsen's characters 'diese eine durchgehende Figur mit dem Seelenleben des Dichters' (RA1 149), Hofmannsthal admits that he recognizes his own technique. The figures of his lyrical dramas are a means to explore the currents of his mental life and to create what Baumann describes as an 'Ich-Welt-Theater'. They are 'Emanationen des universalen Ich' insofar as they originate in that imaginative flexibility which Hofmannsthal sees as a legacy of childhood, a gift that may also become a curse.<sup>15</sup> The connections between artists, aesthetes and children are indeed given their most subtle treatment in *Das kleine Welttheater*, which will be the subject of the next section.

### *'Das kleine Welttheater'*

*Der dramatische Dichter und seine Figuren sind eins: innerlicher Schauspieler.* (RA2 30)

*Das kleine Welttheater* (1897), which Hofmannsthal described to his father as 'eine lyrische dialogisierte Kleinigkeit, mit 7 oder 8 Figuren in der Art eines Puppentheaters', is a solipsistic world theatre in which the lyrical *Ich* fragments

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<sup>15</sup> Gerhart Baumann, 'Hugo von Hofmannsthal: Betrachtungen zu seiner dramatischen Dichtung', *Der Deutschunterricht*, 5, v (1953), 36–56 (pp. 36, 39).

into a number of distinct but intricately related figures.<sup>16</sup> Bringing together many key themes and motifs from Hofmannsthal's lyrical dramas, it combines a mysticism strongly influenced by Neo-Platonism with a modern approach to the life of the mind, and in so doing brings idealized and unidealized images of childhood into strangely harmonious co-existence. Although several detailed commentaries on *Das kleine Welttheater* have been produced, no commentator has so far considered the complex role of childhood within 'das Imaginarium des Dichters', or linked this with the capacity for imaginative role-play evinced by the figures themselves.<sup>17</sup>

In several senses *Das kleine Welttheater* is a work of reaction. For Mennemeier, the lyrical drama is an example of that movement towards *intimes Theater* inspired by Maeterlinck and the French Symbolists. Set in the pre-industrial 1820s and played out against an idyllic landscape, it indeed seems to make a stand against the dominant aesthetics of realism and naturalism; but I shall argue in this and the following chapters that the diminutive of Hofmannsthal's title points to a further reaction, against the monumental theatrical forms of the post-Wagnerian tradition and, more specifically, against the Baroque allegorical form of Calderón's *El gran teatro del mundo*, which was at that time a focus of Catholic cultural revival in Vienna. I shall begin, however, by investigating the rather different nature of the allegory in *Das kleine Welttheater* and the various senses in which it is a *Welttheater*, before looking briefly at each of the figures.

Early plans for 'ein allegorisches Gegenspiel zum "Tor und Tod"' (W3 774) indicate that Hofmannsthal always conceived *Das kleine Welttheater* as an allegorical drama and that it stood from the outset in contrast to the Baroque world-view. If one examines traditions of allegory (and thinks of such works as *Le Roman de la Rose* or *The Pilgrim's Progress*), it is by no means unusual

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<sup>16</sup> Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Briefe 1890–1909*, 2 vols (Berlin: Fischer, 1935–37), I, 215: letter to his father, 7 August 1897.

<sup>17</sup> Juliane Vogel, 'Hofmannsthals "Das kleine Welttheater": Aspekte eines Diminutivs', in *Welttheater, Mysterienspiel, rituelles Theater*, pp. 449–59 (p. 452). Gerhart Baumann, 'Hugo von Hofmannsthal: "Das kleine Welttheater"', in Baumann, *Vereinigungen: Versuche zu neuer Dichtung* (Munich: Fink, 1972), pp. 36–75; Benno von Wiese, 'Hofmannsthal: Das kleine Welttheater', in *Das deutsche Drama vom Barock bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. by von Wiese, 2 vols, 2nd edn (Düsseldorf: Bagel, 1960), II, 229–43; Franz Norbert Mennemeier, '"Verse für ein durch Wasser getriebenes Puppenspiel": Zu Hugo von Hofmannsthals Drama "Das kleine Welttheater oder Die Glücklichen"', in *Drama und Theater der Jahrhundertwende*, ed. by Dieter Käfitz (Tübingen: Francke, 1991), pp. 151–68; Peter Szondi, 'Das kleine Welttheater', in Szondi, *Das lyrische Drama des Fin de siècle* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1975), pp. 318–32.

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that Hofmannsthal should have chosen this particular technique in order to explore tensions and potentialities within the self, and to provide access to truths of a spiritual nature.<sup>18</sup> Far more surprising in *Das kleine Welttheater* is the lack of dramatic action: whereas allegory is traditionally a matter of interacting forces, Hofmannsthal's lyrical drama is largely static and monologic. The stage is dominated by the longitudinal section of a bridge that spans a river flowing beneath it; the figures come to stand or sit on this bridge one after another and reflect upon their present life. The removal of all direct contact and therefore all conflict between them means that Benjamin Bennett's assessment of the playlet as 'a theater of internal *dynamics* in the self' needs some qualification. More apt is Richard Alewyn's description of the figures as 'wechselnde Masken, die der Dichter anprobt und durchfühlt, Möglichkeiten seines Daseins, Projektionen wohl auch eines unrastig fiebernden und vielfältig schwelgenden Zeitalters auf den Spiegel seiner Seele'.<sup>19</sup> The self-contained nature of each monologue allows no dramatic resolution, thus increasing the opacity of the text and leaving the reader to ponder the significance of its many stylistic and thematic parallels.

It is a mistake to think of allegory as necessarily verbal; there has been a rich allegorical tradition in the visual arts at least since the Middle Ages, with later peaks coming in the Italian Renaissance and, in Hofmannsthal's day, in the English Pre-Raphaelite movement. The inspiration for the particular form of allegory used in *Das kleine Welttheater* very probably came from Hofmannsthal's experience of Pre-Raphaelite art, and especially the work of Edward Burne-Jones. Writing on the thirty or so Burne-Jones reproductions exhibited in Vienna in 1894, Hofmannsthal asserted: 'Nirgends ist der Zauber der Allegorie weiter getrieben als im Werke des Burne-Jones' (RA1 547). Regarding the Pre-Raphaelites more as poets than painters, he admires their ability to convey spiritual and psychic values barely accessible to language, and seems to imitate the techniques of figural allegory in *Das kleine Welttheater*, even though this means that he too is bound by its limitations. In both cases graceful, puppet-like figures appear trapped in an act of representation,

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<sup>18</sup> See the following: John MacQueen, *Allegory, The Critical Idiom*, 14 (London: Methuen, 1970); Gay Clifford, *Transformations of Allegory* (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974).

<sup>19</sup> Benjamin Bennett, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal: The Theatres of Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 12, my italics; Richard Alewyn, 'Hugo von Hofmannsthal', in Alewyn, *Probleme und Gestalten* (Frankfurt a.M.: Insel-Verlag, 1974), pp. 102–14 (p. 105).

conveying through their stylized simplicity the most private and yet the most universal of myths:

Diese schönen Wesen hatten ein intensives, wenn auch eng begrenztes Innenleben. Sie waren traurig und verwundert. Sie waren dabei sehr einfach, einfacher als Menschen sind, so einfach wie tiefsinnige Mythen, so einfach wie die mythische Gestalt, deren Traumleben und Irrfahrten und Metamorphosen jeder in sich unaufhörlich ausspinnt: Psyche, unsere Seele. (RA1 546–47)

The painter's figures, like those of the lyrical drama, appear as tentative, experimental metamorphoses of the creative psyche, probing not only the individual mind but also, as the appeal to myth and the use of 'unser' implies, that of the age as a whole.

In the same essay, 'Über moderne englische Malerei' (1894), Hofmannsthal asserts that, despite the archaism of Burne-Jones's paintings, they have none of the dramatic qualities of nineteenth-century historicist art, instead concentrating attention on connections and forces which operate beneath the surface of social interaction.

Diese Wesen haben sich untereinander nichts zu sagen; sie fügen einander kein Gutes und kein Schlimmes zu; daß sie sind, ist alles, was sie voneinander wissen. Die Region des Dramatischen liegt anderswo, der Oberfläche näher; hier in den dämmernden Tiefen des einsamen Seins treten andere Gegenspieler auf, die kosmischen Gewalten, die Herren des Traumes und des Todes [...]. (RA1 547)

A subjective mysticism, a sense of forces beyond the rational and interpersonal also informs *Das kleine Welttheater*. The river flowing beneath the bridge is not only a metaphor for the relentless passing of time but also, in Neo-Platonic terms, for that other reality of which all existence once partook. As a solid, man-made structure set at right-angles above the river, the bridge makes the visual point that, however responsive the individual may be to that other reality, Man operates on a different plane from that of the water and can only gaze wistfully at it.

As in the above quotation, Hofmannsthal is sensitive to the loneliness of Burne-Jones's figures; they are 'Gestalten mit einer fast mystischen Traurigkeit in den sehnsüchtigen Augen' (RA1 546). A similar mood is conveyed in *Das kleine Welttheater* where there is repeatedly a sense of attempting to capture something of which only faint shadows and uncertain reflected images are perceptible; von Wiese has written of 'eine ungewisse Traurigkeit' arising from

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a sense of lack, and Szondi notes that 'ein zweifelnd-klagender Ton' is occasionally to be heard.<sup>20</sup> An essential facet of this distinctive but elusive atmosphere is, however, the fact that, despite their frustrations, the figures are 'Die Glücklichen'. Explaining this subtitle in 1903, Hofmannsthal wrote:

Es [*Das kleine Welttheater*] enthält lauter einzelne Figuren, die ich die 'Glücklichen' nenne. Ich mein' damit die innerlich Reichen. Sie sind es aus den verschiedensten Gründen. Ein Dichter, ein bildender Künstler. Ein alter Mann, glücklich, weil er das Leben durchschaut und es abgelegt hat, wie einen zu schweren, reichen Mantel. Ein junger Mensch, ein junges Mädchen, glücklich vor Erwartung und unbewußtem inneren Reichtum. Ein Jüngling, glücklicher als alle in einem traumhaften — 'wahnsinnigen' — Verhältnis der Liebe und Herrlichkeit zur Welt und allen Geschöpfen.<sup>21</sup>

All have in common the richness of their inner life: in the younger figures this lies in a potential as yet unrealized; for the ageing Gardener it is a calm assurance born of wisdom and worldly experience; for Poet and Sculptor it is the joy of communication and creativity; and for the Madman it is a sense of oneness with all living things which combines the gifts and satisfactions of the other figures in heightened form. This anticipates the unreservedly Neo-Platonic interpretation of *Das kleine Welttheater* which Hofmannsthal promoted in 'Ad me ipsum' (1916): 'jeder dieser Glücklichen irgendwie noch Angehöriger der höchsten Welt, am vollsten teilhaftig der Wahnsinnige' (RA3 600). It is, however, only a partial, somewhat idealized interpretation of the text and should not be allowed to obscure the longings and idiosyncrasies of the figures which, as more detailed analysis will show, are unmistakably conceived in an unidealized fashion.

It is a strange paradox of allegorical systems that they appear essentially closed and yet combine that impression of stasis with a potential for transformation. This is true of *Das kleine Welttheater* insofar as, in his or her unique way, each figure is treading a path which runs not only from birth to death but also from one form of childhood to another. The use of conventional verse forms for everything except the Madman's incoherent final speech reinforces the suggestion that the figures, although they appear separately, are in fact related in a circular (or rather spiral) pattern, the universality of which none,

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<sup>20</sup> Von Wiese, 'Hofmannsthal: Das kleine Welttheater', p. 230; Szondi, 'Das kleine Welttheater', p. 323.

<sup>21</sup> Hofmannsthal, *Briefe 1890–1909*, II, 123: letter to Georg Freiherr zu Franckenstein, 1 August 1903.

except perhaps the Madman, can perceive. As the very last figure he, more than any other, longs to return to an original, paradisaal state in which he will feel no separation, no distinction between his physical self and the undifferentiated flux of life represented by the water flowing under the bridge. Whereas in the Neo-Platonic interpretation of *Das kleine Welttheater* this promises happy fulfilment, an alternative, Dionysian myth, which is also suggested within the text, warns against unleashing forces of disorder and destruction. Like the revolt of the Beggar in *Das Salzburger große Welttheater*, the attempt 'den ganzen Reigen anzuführen' (W3 148) can only end in tragedy.

In January 1895 Hofmannsthal began to work out a plan for the playlet under the title 'Gleichzeitiges Welt-Theater' (W3 593). This may refer to the fact that it is a series of epiphanic moments rather than a continuous action; but it may also suggest that the finished text combines a number of models or notions of world theatre, with the result that each is present in a fragmentary, allusive form and intertwines with the others. Firstly, there is the air of transience, conveyed by the insubstantiality of the puppet-like figures; secondly, there are intimations of the Baroque world theatre, both in Hofmannsthal's title and in the figure of the Gardener, in whom the King, Peasant and Beggar of Calderón's *El gran teatro del mundo* coalesce; thirdly, there are a number of age-related roles contrasting youth and old age in a manner which may be deemed fragmentary in contrast with the all-inclusive 'seven ages of man' set out in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. A fourth and final category brings together the outsiders who shun the social integration implied by Calderón's and Shakespeare's models and assume, like the lyrical *Ich* of 'Manche freilich...' (1895), that their part in the world's theatre goes beyond playing a single role. Poet, Stranger and Madman are all endowed with exceptional creative and perceptive powers, so that they are spectators to the life of the great majority and provide an aesthetic commentary on it. A brief examination of these four perspectives is necessary as a prelude to discussion of the individual voices which make up *Das kleine Welttheater*.

Generations of writers have realized that the combination of theatricality and insubstantiality produces a powerful impression of transience. When Shakespeare's Macbeth reaches the depths of despair, he concludes that life is 'but a walking shadow, a poor player, that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more'. The allegorical revue structure of *Das kleine Welttheater*, in which each puppet-like figure passes across the stage,

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says his or her piece and leaves, conveys the same basic message, producing a sense of dreamlike ethereality rather than of distressing mortality. Even the Doctor's statement that we die as we live does not puncture the mood; unlike in the 1906 *Jedermann* fragment, where the anguished hero feels that he alone is dying, the Doctor's set-piece speech is given as a law of nature applying equally to animal and vegetable life.

The quality of light indicated in the stage directions and evoked by the figures themselves contributes much to the exquisite fragility of this miniature world. The Poet emerges at dusk, just when the shadows are longest, and the loss of visual depth gives the landscape a peculiar two-dimensionality. He and the Stranger compensate for the fading light in their fleeting imaginative visions. By the time the Young Girl sits down on the parapet it is almost dark. But for her shimmering white dress, she would be a disembodied voice, no more a physical presence than the singer who is heard alongside her. The contrast with his matter-of-fact Servant and Doctor makes the Madman, apparently too incoherent a personality to introduce himself, seem even less of this world. By the time he appears it is totally dark, albeit with moments of illumination: the Servant carries a blazing torch, his master uses it to look at his reflection in a mirror and sees only his insubstantiality; and when the moon rises, it too emits only a pale reflected light.

The theme of transience is common to the puppet-play, to Jaques' 'seven ages of man' schema, and to the Baroque world theatre. As already mentioned, the paradigmatic exposition of the latter is Calderón's Corpus Christi play *El gran teatro del mundo*. It is very possible that Hofmannsthal saw a production of this, in Eichendorff's translation, shortly before he wrote the major draft of *Das kleine Welttheater*, as it was staged in the Arkadenhof of Vienna City Hall on 12 and 13 June 1897.<sup>22</sup> Hofmannsthal's title suggests a miniaturized version of the Baroque world theatre, shifting the emphasis from the structures and institutions of feudal society to the more private spirituality of the individual. Abandoning the ethical and theological assumptions of Calderón's play, he does not need its symbolic stage structures. As Vogel points out, Calderón uses the multi-level *Mysterienbühne* to depict a hierarchy of being extending vertically 'vom Himmel durch die Welt zur Hölle'; the King forms the pinnacle of human society, but God and his angels sit above him on the

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<sup>22</sup> The cultural and political implications of this production will be discussed in the third section of Chapter Four.

*Oberbühne*. In Hofmannsthal's playlet, by contrast, movement takes place along the horizontal plane, passing from one side of the bridge to the other and, allowing for the slight curvature of the bridge, remaining at one level.<sup>23</sup> His title is a gesture of defiance, insofar as the whole biblical framework of salvation and damnation is put aside; God and the Devil are nowhere to be seen, there is no motto regulating the behaviour of the figures and no divine law acting as prompt; who created this world is not a pertinent question.

In the figure of the Gardener who was once a King Calderón's world theatre overlaps with Hofmannsthal's schema of age-related roles. The latter juxtaposes representatives of childhood and youth, the Young Girl who is 'noch ein halbes Kind' (W3 141) and the Young Man who is on the verge of entering adult life, with the ageing Gardener and with the Dying Woman of the ballad. Hofmannsthal's fascination with figures who are on a threshold, facing adolescence, old age or death, offsets the rigidity of the Baroque world-view by highlighting the process of maturation. Beyond the fact that they have reached adulthood, age seems immaterial to the situation of Poet, Stranger and Madman who, as three variations on the theme of the artist, reveal their complexity in a process of imaginative role-play or visualization, creating other figures who embody their aspirations and aspects of their psychological make-up. As such they mirror the creative principle on which the playlet as a whole is founded. The prominence given to these figures, who have so many antecedents in Hofmannsthal's works, and are strategically placed at the beginning, middle and end of the text, encourages the reader to interpret *Das kleine Welttheater* as a meditation on the nature of the artist and his role in the modern world.

The figure of the Gardener-King who has withdrawn from public life in order to devote himself to the natural world supports this interpretation, insofar as it suggests one of Hofmannsthal's favourite images of the poet: as a humble person with a seismographic sensitivity to all phenomena, able to intuit in them an order which is partly mystical, partly subjective. Whereas the business of state and the company of fawning courtiers isolated him from 'Leben' in the true sense, tending his flowers has given him an insight into 'die wahren Wege aller Kreatur' (W3 137) which, although indirect, encompasses both the natural and the human world, and inspires a sense of awe that is almost religious. The motif of childhood is strikingly present in the Gardener's speech: the flowers

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<sup>23</sup> Vogel, 'Hofmannsthal's "Das kleine Welttheater"', pp. 450–52.

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he waters are: 'so rein und frisch, wie nicht in jungen Knaben / zum Ton von Flöten fromm der Atem geht' (W3 137). In other words, the poetic individual senses a wholeness and an absence of guile in the natural world which can be compared to the ideal if not to the reality of childhood. Here the Gardener perceives a synthesis of 'Kindlichkeit und Majestät' and is able to rediscover his own childhood self in purified, mystical form. Thus Hofmannsthal establishes the Neo-Platonic principle of the spiral, in which the vision of a higher reality is also a memory of a lost world.

Kings, emperors, and mandarins appear a number of times in Hofmannsthal's writing of the 1890s, embodying both the calling of the poet and the aesthete's childish insistence on being the centre of his world.<sup>24</sup> He originally intended *Das kleine Welttheater* to open with the monologue 'Der Kaiser von China spricht...', thus placing the idea of kingship as a metaphor for narcissistic self-absorption alongside the unassuming receptivity of the Gardener; but, owing to a shortage of space, this and the speeches of the Madman and his entourage were omitted when the text was first published in *Pan* and only the latter were subsequently restored. As the epitome of 'pre-existence', that exhilarating but fragile sense of oneness with the world which for Hofmannsthal was part of the boundless confidence of youth, the Emperor declares in sing-song trochaic verse that his power radiates out in concentric circles over an empire which he has fashioned entirely according to his own designs.

Allen Edlen dieser Erde  
Schuf ich Augen, Wuchs und Lippen,  
Wie der Gärtner an den Blumen. (W1 72)

As in the Gardener's speech, Hofmannsthal establishes a correspondence between the realms of power politics, horticulture and (implicitly) poetry; but whereas the Gardener sees his role as one of unobtrusive service, the arrogant young Emperor, like the poet of 'Welt und Ich', is blind to the hubris of his boasts.

The Young Man, who follows the Gardener onto the stage, is far less of a contrasting figure than the Emperor of China would have been, in that his basic stance is one of caring sensitivity. On the threshold of adult life, he is fascinated by the adult world, but looks at it with the eyes of an outsider;

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<sup>24</sup> I find Vogel's suggestion that the Gardener's renunciation is a reference to the decision of successive Habsburg emperors to remain aloof from international politics somewhat implausible, given that Hofmannsthal's main focus is not public life but the private concerns of the creative artist.

personal destiny appears as a series of nets and snares intended to trap the unwary. However, the Young Man's embryonic social conscience, manifested in his concern for those less fortunate than himself, suggests that he will ultimately overcome his anxiety and achieve social integration. Indeed, this issue troubles him less urgently than his awakening sexuality.

The symbolic connotations of the Young Man's horse and of his dream have received some critical attention, with Gilbert showing that the horse is for Hofmannsthal a symbol of unconscious desires or libidinal drives.<sup>25</sup> The harmonious relationship between the Young Man and his steed, who indeed go to sleep together, suggests that, on the surface at least, he is at peace with himself. He does not ride the horse because he does not feel the need to curb his instincts and later removes the bit, the instrument by which he controls it. However, the Young Man's anxieties break through in the dream, which Hofmannsthal presents as a form of inner theatre. The scene is a wild hunt in a forest where the Young Man plays the active role of the hunter, thus inverting the earlier images of entrapment. The rich visual scenario of the dream owes much to the Young Man's experience of art and history: he sees himself armed with bow and arrows and accompanied by three large dogs 'wie auf alten Bildern' (W3 138). As in medieval tapestries, where hunting and battle scenes tend to be stylized, bloodless affairs, it takes place without carnage or suffering. The dream is an indirect product of the child's natural propensity for role-play, akin to that in the prologue of *Der Tod des Tizian*; but it is not an escapist fantasy. The Young Man's mind dresses up his present situation in historical costume so as to achieve greater distance from it and work through his problems more efficiently.

Contrary to Frink's assertion, the hunt and the following sequence, in which the Young Man looks into a well and sees his father's face instead of his own, are most convincingly interpreted in modern psychological and more precisely in Freudian terms. The dark, steep-sided gorge into which he drives the birds with a combination of pleasure and anxiety has unmistakable sexual connotations, with the image of the father suggesting both sexual prohibition and adolescent crisis. Indeed, precisely at this point the Young Man's horse, the symbol of his unconscious aspirations, responds to an unidentified stimulus and

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<sup>25</sup> Mary E. Gilbert, 'The Image of the Horse in Hofmannsthal's Poetic Works', *Modern Austrian Literature*, 7, iii/iv (1974), 58-76; see also Helen Frink, *Animal Symbolism in Hofmannsthal's Works* (Berne: Lang, 1987), pp. 121-32.

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wakes him. This can plausibly be interpreted as his awakening sexuality, part of a more general desire to assert his independence from parental authority.

The Young Man sees his dream and its startling aftermath, in which he kills three birds by throwing his horse's snaffle at them, as an epiphany, one of a series which are bringing him greater self-knowledge. He is forced to accept that the emotions and aggressions discharged by this inner theatre are a part of himself, a realization which makes him feel 'als wär ich um ein Stück / gealtert in dem Augenblick' (W3 139). What is remarkable is that Hofmannsthal shows the Young Man crossing a psychological threshold, but internally, without actual conflict with other people. His experiences have caused him anxiety and isolated him from his peers but, like the subject of 'Der Jüngling und die Spinne', also written in 1897, he is happy 'im Vorgefühl' (W1 71); both figures envisage their future life as a labyrinthine path, but one that will ultimately return to its starting-point.

denn alle Wege sind mir sehr geheimnisvoll  
und doch wie zubereitet, wie für mich  
von Händen in der Morgenfrühe hingebaut,  
und überall erwarte ich den Pfad zu sehn,  
der anfangs von ihr weg zu vieler Prüfung führt  
und wunderbar verschlungen doch zu ihr zurück. (W3 139)

While the epiphanic revelation, a manifestation of the Young Man's inner resources, averts the generational conflict, there is a promise of social integration and cultural continuity in the envisaged return to his point of departure.

Hofmannsthal juxtaposes the structured *Bildungsweg* of the Young Man and the dignified, purposeful old age of the Gardener with the cluelessness of the Young Girl and the pathetic return to childhood of the Dying Woman in the ballad: 'Mit mir ist's aus. / Mir ist zu Mut wie einem Kind, / das abends kommt nach Haus' (W3 141). Here adult life has not brought fulfilment and self-knowledge; the circular path has led back to the helplessness rather than to the wholeness of childhood. Trying to look back over her life, the Dying Woman gropes towards the idea that life is a dream to excuse her lack of rational understanding and control. The memories are so confused that she can barely narrate events in sequence and remembers only the gradual degeneration of her life and of the relationships which dominated it. Whereas Hofmannsthal seems to expect men to find fulfilment in artistic creativity and social responsibility, the ballad suggests that women can only look for it in the life

of the heart; viewed uncharitably, a woman's life is not so much a matter of growth and achievement as aimless movement from one man to another. One might even venture to suggest parallels between the Woman's unease with regard to her past and that which is typical of the ageing aesthete.

The Dying Woman, who brings with her the anguish of mortality and the misery of a wasted life, has no place in the realm of 'Die Glücklichen'. Hence she does not appear in person, and the ballad form draws attention to itself as a foreign body in *Das kleine Welttheater*. The Dying Woman is rather a musical counterpoint to the Young Girl, a mood summoned up by that figure. That the child should request a sad song whilst she sits alone in the darkness suggests that she has already learned to manipulate her emotions in a manner that has disturbing parallels with 'Age of Innocence'. Perhaps this doll-like figure is further proof that the cherished ideal is defunct in the 1890s? Certainly, she is something of a turn-of-the-century archetype and has that 'komplizierte Naivetät' (RA1 228) which Hofmannsthal saw in Altenberg's work.

The Woman's sorry tale meets with incomprehension and disdain. The Young Girl immediately writes off as 'dumm' (W3 142) what she is too young and too tired to understand. This figure, for whom the world's theatre is only an immense space filled with unrelated objects (in effect the 'Chaos toter Sachen' evoked in *Der Tor und der Tod*), demonstrates once more the limitations of age and the need for people to give meaning to the world around them. One man's experience cannot be another man's wisdom, nor indeed another woman's. Although the Young Girl senses that the woman's fate may be a gloomy premonition of her own, this inspires her not to sadness but to a paradoxical confidence that her horizons are wide open: 'Mir kann doch alles noch geschehn!' (W3 142). Her charm, like that of the Young Man, lies in the fact that her life has hardly begun.

The monologue of the Young Girl follows that of the Stranger, one of the three artist figures who are outsiders to the scheme of age-roles. In notes to *Das kleine Welttheater* Hofmannsthal considered the possibility that the Stranger, a sculptor modelled on Cellini, might address the Young Girl directly:

der Fremde (im Begriff sich zu entfernen)  
das junge Mädchen

er: ich weiss das rechte Wort nicht für Deine Einfachheit und doch liebst Du mich. ich möchte Dir ein Kind machen

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ihr Leben: tauchen in krystallklarem Fluss, dann Kinder gebären  
Kammerthür offen lassen und warten

er: ist vielfältig, nicht verworren (W3 599)

The reader can be relieved at having been spared what looks on the surface like a rather distasteful episode of paedophilia. Sexuality, which dominates the life of the Stranger, is to be the centre of the Young Girl's. Sexual fulfilment will give a period of intense happiness, but that will inevitably be followed by childbearing. Again using the metaphor of the river, Hofmannsthal idealizes this as a brief immersion in crystalline waters and casts a discreet veil over the suffering which may follow it. Although this material was not included in the finished text, there are intimations of an erotic sensuality as the Girl mentions undressing in the dark and leaving the shutters open so that she can hear birdsong.

Hofmannsthal's crude-sounding note that the Stranger would like to make the Girl pregnant makes one question the energies which fuel his artistic creativity. The Stranger's first words trace his decision to work in gold back to childhood experience: he tells how he was always fascinated by flowing water and mistook the metallic-looking reflections of fish for jewellery glistening on the riverbed. A disturbing simile describes the progress of this fixation: 'Wie Narben an dem Leib von Kindern wuchs / mit mir dies eingegrabene Verlangen!' (W3 140). Once again Hofmannsthal offers a decidedly untraditional picture of childhood. One might compare it with the child in Kafka's story *Der Landarzt* who explains: 'mit einer schönen Wunde kam ich auf die Welt; das war meine ganze Ausstattung'.<sup>26</sup> Rather than fading with the years, this scar grows and etches itself deeper into the flesh; the child is neither beautiful and untainted, nor satisfied and serene. But without his disfiguring desires the Stranger, like Marie Bashkirtseff, would most probably not be an artist.

The psychological quirks of the Stranger anticipate Freud's theory that all art arises through the sublimation of unsatisfied (predominantly libidinal) desires which often have their origins in early childhood. Retaining his symbolic fascination with water, the Stranger looks at the river more intently than any other figure and imagines in its flow an endless succession of metamorphosing human forms. Enthralled by these images of force and

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<sup>26</sup> Franz Kafka, *Erzählungen*, ed. by Max Brod (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1945), p. 152.

youthful beauty, he is possessed by a frenzied desire to capture their essence in sculpture:

nun wirft sie [die Gestalt] auseinander ihre Glieder  
und für sich taumelt jedes dieser wilden.  
Mich überkommt ein ungeheurer Rausch,  
die Hände beben, solches nachzubilden,

nur ist es viel zu viel, und alles wahr. (W3 140)

The Stranger's passion for his art is a sublimation of the sexual urge so blatantly obvious in Hofmannsthal's note: artistic creation is a substitute for procreation.

However intense his emotional involvement, and however unreservedly the sculptor surrenders himself to his task, he will encounter certain difficulties. Firstly, he must realize, like Pygmalion before him, that the libidinal energy expended in the act of creation is not sufficient to overcome 'das selige In-sich-geschlossen-sein' (W3 140) of the aesthetic object. Secondly, he must accept the need for symbolic form. One image will have to stand for the thousands he sees in his mind's eye: a pre-pubescent, almost androgynous figure conveying 'jenes atmend Unbewusste [...] / womit die Jugend über Seelen siegt' (W3 140–41). Such a statue could be perfect in a way that no living human child ever is. In other words, Hofmannsthal again suggests that the 'Age of Innocence' is an ideal to be created by the artist. Childlike, androgynous figures appear repeatedly in Hofmannsthal's work of the mid-1890s, their lack of defined sexuality representing a quasi-mystical sense of wholeness which, in this case, allows the artist to enjoy vicariously the unblemished childhood he himself never had.

Although close examination of his speeches reveals dark, barely acknowledged desires, the Stranger is clear about his artistic objectives, and it is very possible that Hofmannsthal's note, 'er: ist vielfältig, nicht verworren' was intended as a contrast with the Poet. Certainly, they are endowed with a similar intensity of imagination, but the Poet appears more confused by his imaginings and is uncertain how to find poetic forms that will make his experiences accessible to others. This raises the question whether he is a good Poet, a failed one, or merely, as Baumann insists, an immature one lacking 'die

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Entscheidungskraft, die schicksalhaften Konfigurationen zu entziffern, von der magischen Welt der Erscheinungen zum Sein durchzudringen'.<sup>27</sup>

The Poet repeatedly mirrors himself in other figures, dons masks which should enable him to reflect upon his situation. In this he is a pale imitation of Hofmannsthal himself, but also the most manipulative of the figures; indeed, the idea that he sits in his bath until his preferred hour has overtones of the decadent aesthete.<sup>28</sup> As the Poet searches the shadows of evening, he also gropes for an appropriate simile for his behaviour, quickly rejecting his first idea, the slightly ridiculous 'Vogelsteller', in favour of the fisherman on the cliff who scans the sea for shadowy signs of fish. As the anticipated spectacle begins, the Poet sinks into a trance-like state, he is constantly filled with surprise and delight, as if his fantasy were independent of him. It is, insofar as he can only guess at its meaning; the creatures of his mind speak a language he does not understand; they carry out ritualistic actions of which he can only hazard interpretations:

sie knien nieder ... einen zu verehren?  
vielmehr sie graben, alle bücken sich:  
ist eine Krone dort? ist dort die Spur  
von einem Mord verborgen? (W3 135)

Böschenstein has argued that the Poet in *Das kleine Welttheater*, who emerges symbolically late in the day, is intended to be a poet of Hofmannsthal's own time and reflects the artistic dilemmas of his 'late' generation.<sup>29</sup> There is much to recommend this interpretation. Many of the Poet's fantasies are situated in that shadowland between remembered history and pure imagination where historical events become images, mediated through the art of intervening generations. As Hofmannsthal writes elsewhere, this is typical of the 1890s: 'Wir sind fast alle in der einen oder anderen Weise in eine durch das Medium der Künste angeschaute, stilisierte Vergangenheit verliebt' (RA1 196). The band of pilgrims, lacing up their shoes for an arduous journey, reflect the trepidation with which the Poet engages in serious historical study.

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<sup>27</sup> Baumann, 'Hugo von Hofmannsthal: "Das kleine Welttheater"', p. 44.

<sup>28</sup> On 'Spiegelung' more generally and as a dramatic technique see Günther Erken, *Hofmannsthals dramatischer Stil: Untersuchungen zur Symbolik und Dramaturgie*, Hermaea, n.s. 20 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1967), pp. 69–119.

<sup>29</sup> Bernhard Böschenstein, 'Der junge Hofmannsthal heute — Das Erbe einer Erbschaft', in Böschenstein, *Leuchttürme: Von Hölderlin zu Celan: Wirkung und Vergleich* (Frankfurt a.M.: Insel-Verlag, 1977), pp. 247–70, especially pp. 248–54.

As he sees them looking weary and downhearted, the Poet breaks off abruptly and turns his attention to a more accessible subject, the battle of Cascina, as mediated by Michelangelo's cartoon or, more precisely, by Goethe's translation of Cellini's thoughts on that drawing.<sup>30</sup> The battle which reaches the Poet by such an indirect route is transformed into a timeless aesthetic object, the struggle in the water little more than an extraordinary composition in which glints of polished armour are seen amongst glistening naked bodies. Although the Poet concludes 'wie schön ist diese Schlacht!' (W3 134), he resolutely turns away from it. Once again he projects his desires onto imaginary figures and follows their actions as a form of inner theatre. It is a fainthearted form of wish-fulfilment, for the man standing on the bank risks what the Poet does not dare: that is, he turns his back on the art of past generations and swims out into dark and unknown waters. But the Poet is uneasy with this vision of himself, and soon turns away to look upstream where his cultural heritage lies. It is a compromise, an admission that the poet of the 1890s would like to enjoy the best of both worlds, to draw on the past without feeling restricted by it.<sup>31</sup>

In order to write about an experience that has left his senses quivering 'wie angeschlagene Saiten' (W3 135) the Poet plans to withdraw into the forest and rely on his memory. But what will he be trying to say? And is it of any value? An answer to these questions is given by the monologue itself. The Poet is trying, as Hofmannsthal himself tried in the poem 'Manche freilich...' (1895), to articulate his confusion, to show the difficulty of finding an authentic voice whilst feeling alternately stimulated by one's cultural heritage and weighed down by 'ganz vergessener Völker Müdigkeiten' (W1 54). The same technique is used with considerable success in both works: not a direct statement of the problematic but a series of thought-provoking associative images which allow the reader to work through the confusion experienced by the poet as he explores the tensions in his creative life. The Poet, like the Young Man, is uncertain how to respond to the interpenetration of dream and reality, which seems to be beyond his control. Consequently, he too is uneasy with the notion of destiny. In comparison with everyday life, his poetic imaginings appear exhilarating and call him to the life of the aesthetic adventurer. If he accepts their challenge, he will necessarily turn his back on

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<sup>30</sup> Hanns Ost, 'Ein Motiv Michelangelos bei Hofmannsthal: "Die Schlacht von Cascina" und "Das kleine Welttheater"', *Euphorion*, 59 (1965), 173–77.

<sup>31</sup> On Hofmannsthal's responses to historicism see Jacques Le Rider, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal: Historicisme et modernité* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1995), pp. 1–37.

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the single social role which is the destiny of the great majority and assert, with the poet of 'Manche freilich...', that his part is 'mehr als dieses Lebens / Schlanke Flamme oder schmale Leier' (W1 54). The Poet's work will stimulate thought because, in projecting his anxieties onto his readership (the 'Knaben in den dumpfen Städten, / [...] unter des geahnten Schicksals Bürde, / wie überladne Reben schwankend' (W3 135–36)), he has begun to wrestle with his poetic destiny. Baumann is correct to see the Poet as an immature figure, but he is well on the way to overcoming his difficulties.

Hofmannsthal invites his reader to view the three outsiders of *Das kleine Welttheater* in Nietzschean terms, as figures who are able in their rapturous appreciation of beauty to escape briefly from the Apollonian principle of order and individuation. All three enjoy moments of wild Dionysian abandonment which take them beyond the limitations of role and identity. The Madman, whom Hofmannsthal may have modelled on Friedrich Hölderlin, spurs his horse on with the same relentless fury with which he is driven by 'die rätselvolle Gottheit' (W3 144). The Poet contemplates the Dionysian adventure in the swimmer who derives animal pleasure from surrendering himself to the movement of the water and ecstatically takes in everything 'mit trunknen Blicken' (W3 135). But he is not ready to be a *Rauschkünstler*, for the loneliness and vulnerability of the swimmer disconcerts him. Although sculpture, like poetry, is more conventionally associated with the Apollonian, the Stranger too experiences a moment of creative frenzy, when the will to form merges with the sexual energies which fuel it. However, intoxication and ecstasy are, by their nature, temporary states, offering only a brief release from Apollonian self-consciousness; the Madman's insanity lies in his desire to make a more permanent escape.

The account of the Madman's life given by his Servant is practically a psychological case study. Once again there is a problematic relationship between father and son: the son rebels against paternal authority and bourgeois values when he refuses to emulate the father and, styling himself a prince, affects aristocratic manners and modes of dress. Although not specifically an artist, the Madman runs the gamut of Hofmannsthal's lyrical archetypes — the son, heir, wastrel and dancer — and his rebellion is to some extent symptomatic of the artistic generation of the 1890s. In the manner of the literary avant-garde, the Madman actually carries through what the Poet does not dare: he throws his cultural inheritance out of the window — his father's wealth in gold and plate, precious stones, fabrics and weaponry. In so doing, he asserts

the right to define his existence without reference to the past or to any ready-made system.

Although Hofmannsthal described the Madman in a note as 'Narcissus, allen Dingen verwandt' (W3 602), the Servant's narrative suggests that he in fact passes through and beyond narcissistic self-absorption, ultimately regarding his various identities as mere 'Schalen' and yearning to transcend them altogether. This abandonment of selfhood may be viewed as a regression to and beyond childhood, both in psychological and in mystical terms. It begins as his masculine identity is described as fragmenting into two diametrically opposed female natures and continues as he tires of human society, instead finding 'brothers' in rocks and rivers. That the Madman does not speak for himself until the end also suggests a regression to childlike dependence; his Servant closes by saying that he is 'wie nicht ein Kind ist / sanft und hilflos' (W3 147). The negative is not just there for purposes of intensification: the Madman has almost regressed beyond childhood, viewing himself as an undifferentiated part of the whole rather than a distinct physical entity.

The Madman's final speech is a summary of *Das kleine Welttheater* insofar as it pits his Dionysian vision against the principle of order which underlies not only the Baroque world-view but also the Gardener's relationship with the natural world and the structured *Bildungsweg* anticipated by the Young Man. Having discovered primal chaos in the 'ungeheures Gemenge' (W3 146) within himself, he works outwards 'gleichnishaft', applying the same principle to the world around him. Convinced that 'Das Wirkliche fängt kein Gewebe ein' (W3 148), he regards the order intuited by the poet and the hierarchies of the Baroque world theatre as attempts to contain primal energies which cannot and will not be contained. He responds by transposing the categories of dream and reality, making life the dream which denies access to the reality beyond: the structures imposed by art and traditional authority are but a 'traumhaftes Abbild des Wirklichen' (W3 148) which he yearns to transcend. His attempt to achieve this by jumping off the bridge makes clear the sublime tragedy of his vision; as his Doctor and Servant hold him back from self-destruction he takes on the mantle of Bacchus 'mit leisem Spott' (W3 149); in identifying with the god briefly chained by Pentheus in Euripides' *Bacchae* he is still playing a role but knows that it will probably be his last.

Although the tragic Dionysian myth, which Hofmannsthal summed up in 1893 as 'die in Individuen zerstückelte Welt sehnt sich nach Einheit, Dionysos Zagreus will wiedergeboren werden' (RA3 359), provides an extremely

satisfying interpretative perspective on *Das kleine Welttheater*, when Hofmannsthal himself returned to the text in 'Ad me ipsum' (1916), its more disturbing, Dionysian aspects seemed to take a back seat, his view instead being strongly influenced by the section on Blake in Rudolf Kassner's *Die Mystik, die Künstler und das Leben* (1900). Kassner, who, like Hofmannsthal, made extensive use of theatrical imagery, wrote of the figures in Blake's dreamlike world:

Es ist einem, wie wenn man dem Leben auf einer traumhaften Bühne zusähe. Schatten wandeln hier auf und ab, sie mengen sich und scheiden wieder [...]. Sie sprechen ihre Worte ohne Stichwort und ihre Reden treffen sich in wunderbarer Weise. Sie geben Antwort auf Fragen, die sie nicht gehört haben; es wird ihnen erwidert von dort, wohin sie ihre Worte nicht gerichtet haben. [...] Es ist wie auf einer Bühne, auf der die Spieler einander nicht kennen und der eine des anderen Thun am eigenen Leiden reflektiert. Wir verstehen dieses Leben noch immer nicht und halten alles für einen Traum, ein Spiel von Schatten, die ihr eigenes Schicksal agieren, bis wir lernen, dass es keine Menschen sind, die wir vor uns haben, sondern 'States', Zustände im Leben von Völkern, Stimmungen in uns selbst.<sup>32</sup>

This allowed Hofmannsthal to see himself as following in a tradition of Neo-Platonic dream theatre, one which, if one were to trace its history, would surely include the work of Burne-Jones. Kassner's text certainly evokes an atmosphere akin to that of Hofmannsthal's allegorical drama, and the idea of the figures as moments in the creative psyche and responses to a given cultural situation is compatible both with the historical specificity of *Das kleine Welttheater* and with Hofmannsthal's deeply personal concern with issues of creativity.<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately, this breadth of insight was not maintained in 'Ad me ipsum': for Hofmannsthal writing in 1916 the main value of the Neo-Platonic perspective was that it removed the anguish and the tragedy from *Das kleine Welttheater*: the Madman became 'der reinste state', the other figures imperfect reflections of it (RA3 608).

Such a partial interpretation is clearly unsatisfactory, and Hofmannsthal must be suspected in 'Ad me ipsum' of attempting to demonstrate continuity in his literary career at the expense of individual works. However, it cannot be

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<sup>32</sup> Rudolf Kassner, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Ernst Zinn and Klaus E. Bohnenkamp, 10 vols (Pfullingen: Neske, 1969–91), I, 58–59; Gerhart Baumann, *Rudolf Kassner – Hugo von Hofmannsthal: Kreuzwege des Geistes* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1964).

<sup>33</sup> For an interpretation which suggests that the Gardener and Madman represent alternative responses to the situation of Austrian culture, see Schorske, 'The Transformation of the Garden', in Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, pp. 279–321 (pp. 313–15).

denied that the common focus on fragmentation and re-integration of the whole creates a basic compatibility between the Dionysian and Neo-Platonic myths, and that Hofmannsthal had always been attracted to Neo-Platonism, for example writing in 1891: 'ich glaube, Farben sind verschieden gebrochenes Licht, so wären auch alle Verschiedenheiten der Erscheinungswelt nur verschieden klar erkannte Seiten einer Wahrheit' (RA3 321). *Das kleine Welttheater* is most genuinely Neo-Platonic in its treatment of the childhood motif: the maintained or rediscovered connection with a childhood self gives each figure of the playlet access to a higher world; the artists are able to take others back by creating an image of what they see and feel and by reproducing the processes by which it may be reached. Indeed, what Kassner writes on mystical memories of paradise in Blake's work is extremely applicable here: 'Womit seine Mystik die ganze Menschheit von einst begabt, ist in Resten auf dieser Erde im Geiste der Inspirierten erhalten, in der Seele der Kinder wie in kleinen Spiegeln aufgefangen.'<sup>34</sup> However, if one is to do justice to *Das kleine Welttheater*, this interpretation of the childhood motif must be complemented by a recognition of its less idealized psychological dimension, which combines with the Romantic and Neo-Platonic perspectives to give the text its richness of meaning and peculiarly modern resonance.

To sum up, *Das kleine Welttheater* as a whole is a solipsistic world theatre founded on the essentially theatrical nature of Hofmannsthal's lyricism, and the theme of theatricality is constantly present. Both the ageing Gardener and the Madman have a critical awareness of the nature of social role-play and, seeing it as a barrier to knowledge and communication, retreat from the roles which they would normally be expected to play. While the one intuits a subjective symbolic order in the natural world, the other succumbs to a mysticism founded on chaos. Although the Young Man and the Young Girl both have some innate sensitivity, they lack a clear understanding of their situation; Hofmannsthal leaves the reader to identify the potential connection between the Young Girl and the Dying Woman and to complete the interpretation of the Young Man's dream, an inner theatre which allows him to resolve conflicts of which his waking mind is only dimly aware. Here and in identifying the sources of the Stranger's creativity Freud is a valuable guide. Hofmannsthal's Poet and Stranger share an imaginative capacity to create figures which embody their aspirations and desires. This is most marked in the case of the

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<sup>34</sup> Kassner, *Sämtliche Werke*, I, 31.

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Poet, a slightly bewildered 1890s aesthete who manipulates the theatre of his mind with a facility akin to that of the child in 'Age of Innocence' but lacks the self-assurance of the Stranger. The complex structure of parallels and contrasts between the figures allows Hofmannsthal to conduct a wide-ranging dialogue with himself in parallel monologues.

One question which remains to be considered is to what extent *Das kleine Welttheater* can be said to point forward to *Das Salzburger große Welttheater*. Firstly, there is a sense in which the poetic wholeness of *Das kleine Welttheater*, Hofmannsthal's spiritualization of the fragmented Machian personality, anticipates the organic wholeness of the Baroque *Welttheater* and Hofmannsthal's later attempt to use that as a means of re-establishing valid social ties. Furthermore, he was to retain both a significant affinity with Neo-Platonism and a faith in the spiritual resources of the individual. Secondly, it is noteworthy that Hofmannsthal felt happy with the notion of allegory as early as the 1890s and was already aware of the full breadth of the allegorical tradition. Thirdly, Hofmannsthal's treatment of the motif of childhood, his fusion of psychology with Romantic idealism, is another pointer for the future, insofar as it allows him to combine personal experience with metaphysical reflection, memory and dream. A childlike nature is needed not only to appreciate the beauty of the world, in the Neo-Platonic tradition, but also, in Christian teaching, to gain access to the kingdom of heaven. This line of thought culminates in the sense of rebirth experienced by the Beggar in *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* and in the messianic figure of the Kinderkönig in the first version of *Der Turm*.

What should one conclude from the allusion to Calderón's *Das große Welttheater* (*El gran teatro del mundo*) in Hofmannsthal's title? According to Schaefer, this alone constitutes 'ein Moment, das ihn [Hofmannsthal] von vornherein der christlich-katholischen Theater-Tradition vergangener Jahrhunderte nahebrachte'.<sup>35</sup> However, following the logic of this argument, even Schnitzler's use of the *theatrum mundi* is sufficient to demonstrate an affinity with the Catholic tradition. In positive terms, *Das kleine Welttheater* is best considered in the context of that turn-of-the-century predilection for short lyrical dramas, suitable only for private reading or for performance on an *Intimbühne*; it demonstrates, at the very least, a sovereign disregard for the

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<sup>35</sup> Grete Schaefer, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal I: Die Gestalten* (Berlin: Junker & Dünnhaupt, 1933), p. 11.

public, often monumental and cultic forms characteristic of nineteenth-century theatre; as an alternative form of *Welttheater*, Hofmannsthal's playlet consciously turns its back on the tradition of large-scale historical and mythical dramas which was promoted by the German Romantics and reached its peak with Wagner's *Musikdramen*.<sup>36</sup> The production of Calderón's *Das große Welttheater* which probably inspired Hofmannsthal's choice of title was part of the post-Wagnerian development of that tradition which, thanks to the rise of political Catholicism in Austria, took on a strongly Catholic colouring. It is therefore possible that, with *Das kleine Welttheater*, set in the pre-industrial *Biedermeier* era of the 1820s, Hofmannsthal was reacting against or choosing to ignore not only cultural but also socio-political trends. The precise nature of these will be explored in Chapters Three and Four.

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<sup>36</sup> Roger Paulin, 'The Drama', in *The Romantic Period in Germany*, ed. by Siegbert Prawer (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1970), pp. 173–203.

## CHAPTER THREE

### WORLD THEATRE AFTER WAGNER

It was suggested at the end of Chapter Two that the 'soul theatre' of Hofmannsthal's *Das kleine Welttheater* may be seen, at one level, as a reaction against established cultural traditions, exhibiting the poet's private world in a semi-conscious expression of dissatisfaction with developments in the public sphere. This chapter moves into that public sphere, showing the extent to which, within Austria, notions of *Welttheater* primarily inspired by Wagner helped to bring together politics and culture in a number of radical ideologies and prompted a vogue for monumental world theatre plays. Chapter Four will take up the story in the 1890s, showing that the next stage in this development was a revival of Catholic cultic drama closely tied in with the rise of the Christian Social party. Discussion in these two chapters spans the last three decades of the nineteenth century, therefore coinciding with the period between Hofmannsthal's birth (in 1874) and the composition of *Das kleine Welttheater* in 1897.

Chapters Three and Four introduce Richard von Kralik, both as a means to explore the nature of the Wagnerian legacy in Austria, and as a figure whose fascination with the notion of *Welttheater* can valuably be compared and contrasted with that of Hofmannsthal. Despite Kralik's phenomenal productivity and his influence on Austrian cultural life, his literary work has received surprisingly little attention.<sup>1</sup> A number of studies were written during his lifetime, but these tend towards hagiography, and recent Catholic evaluations have been similarly uncritical.<sup>2</sup> Although Kralik is discussed by Nadler on

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<sup>1</sup> Franz Bambule, 'Verzeichnis der gedruckten und ungedruckten Werke von Richard Kralik', *Mitteilungen der Kralik-Gesellschaft* (Vienna, July 1954). Although this inventory consists of 18 typewritten sheets, it is by no means exhaustive, mentioning few of Kralik's many periodical publications and none of his newspaper articles or reviews.

<sup>2</sup> Adolf Innerkofler, *Richard von Kralik: Ein Beitrag zur neuesten deutschen Poetik* (Baden-Baden: Weber, 1904); Hanns Maria Truxa, *Richard von Kralik: Ein Lebensbild mit einer Auswahl aus seiner Dichtung und einer Sammlung kritischer Stimmen*, 3rd edn (Vienna and Leipzig: Fromme, 1905); *Richard von Kralik zum 80. Geburtstag*, ed. by Paul Pauer, Werkstatt-Bücherei, 1 (Vienna: the management of *Aus unserer Werkstatt*, 1933); Edith Raybould, *Richard von Kraliks Erneuerung*

several occasions and also features in the fourth volume of the *Deutsch-Österreichische Literaturgeschichte* (1937), edited by Eduard Castle, neither account is reliable, the one being coloured by Nadler's now discredited theories of cultural geography and the other written by Wilhelm Oehl, one of Kralik's staunchest supporters.<sup>3</sup> For reasons explored in Chapter One, Kralik is rarely mentioned in modern literary and intellectual histories.<sup>4</sup> The only commentator who has attempted to redress the balance is Roger Bauer.<sup>5</sup> His articles are, however, far too sketchy to be of real value; the point is not, as he suggests, that Bahr and Nadler have undeservedly been pushed out of the picture by Schorske and Broch, but that the shortcomings of the former pairing are not sufficient reason to disregard the Catholic element altogether. In trying to trace a line of development from Bayreuth to Salzburg Bauer fails to make the vital distinction, brought out in this study, between those products of the post-Wagnerian tradition which were never performed and therefore accessible only to the intelligentsia, and Kralik's festival plays, many of which were staged and did therefore affect public awareness of the Catholic cultural heritage. For this

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*altdeutscher Dichtung: Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte Österreichs* (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag für Unterricht, Wissenschaft und Kunst, 1934). A scholarly but uncritical recent account is Konrad F. Kienesberger, OSB, 'De: romantische Literaturbegriff Richard von Kraliks und seine spätere Weiterentwicklung', in *120. Jahresbericht des Öffentlichen Gymnasiums der Benediktiner in Kremsmünster* (Wels: Kommissionsverlag bei Verlag Welsermühl, 1977), pp. 131–70; there are a number of factual inaccuracies in Alfred Stachelberger, *Richard von Kralik: Der große Kultur-, Geschichts- und Dichterphilosoph: Ein fast vergessenes Säkulargenie*, Arbeitskreis für kirchliche Zeit- und Wiener Diözesangeschichte, Miscellanea, 3rd series, 56 (Vienna: Wiener katholische Akademie, 1985). Moritz Enzinger provides a more balanced, objective view in his introduction to Richard von Kralik, *Gral und Romantik* (Graz and Vienna: Stiasny, 1963), pp. 5–26. Published under the auspices of the now defunct Kralik-Gesellschaft, the volume consists of selected extracts from Kralik's work.

<sup>3</sup> *Deutsch-Österreichische Literaturgeschichte*, ed. by Johann Wilibald Nagl, Jakob Zeidler, and Eduard Castle, 4 vols (Vienna and Leipzig: Fromme, 1899–1937), IV, ed. by Eduard Castle (1937), especially 1600–34; Josef Nadler, *Literaturgeschichte des deutschen Volkes: Dichtung und Schrifttum der deutschen Stämme und Landschaften*, 4 vols, 4th edn (Berlin: Propyläen-Verlag, 1939–41), IV, 200; Nadler, *Literaturgeschichte Österreichs*, 2nd edn (Salzburg: Otto Müller, 1951), pp. 417–23.

<sup>4</sup> Notable exceptions are Albert Fuchs, *Geistige Strömungen in Österreich 1867–1918* (Vienna: Globus-Verlag, 1949; repr. Vienna: Löcker, 1978), pp. 43–82; and Roy Pascal, *From Naturalism to Expressionism: German Literature and Society 1880–1918* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1973), pp. 189–92.

<sup>5</sup> Roger Bauer, 'Hofmannsthals Konzeption der Salzburger Festspiele', *Hofmannsthal-Forschungen*, 2 (1974), 131–39 (pp. 131–33). This material is reproduced almost verbatim in 'Die Wiederkunft des Barock und das Ende des Ästhetizismus', in *Fin de siècle: Zu Literatur und Kunst der Jahrhundertwende*, ed. by Roger Bauer et al., Studien zur Philosophie und Literatur des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts, 35 (Frankfurt a.M.: Klostermann, 1977), pp. 206–22 (pp. 211–13).

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reason alone, irrespective of the role which Kralik later played in Austrian cultural life, they warrant close examination.

#### *Cultural Background: Crisis and Response*

The early 1870s were a time of social and intellectual uncertainty. Progress towards industrialization, which had been steady since mid-century, accelerated, bringing with it a host of problems. The economic prosperity fostered by successive liberal governments proved to be founded to a disturbing extent on fraud and exploitation. While some made handsome profits, others lost traditional employment and were forced to move into the cities where thousands struggled against abject poverty. In this atmosphere the Enlightenment image of man as a rational being, concerned above all to provide for his material needs, began to look tarnished and inadequate, so that many intellectuals sought to rediscover those aspects of instinctual and emotional life which had been foregrounded during the Romantic era.

Reaction against the values of the *Ringstraße* era (Austria's equivalent to the *Gründerzeit*) was largely a generational revolt, with the University of Vienna becoming the focus of radical activity in the 1870s. McGrath has shown that a fascination with the musical compositions and cultural politics of Richard Wagner and with Nietzsche's critique of liberal culture led many students to become involved in forms of populist politics which, like Wagner's art, sought to elicit non-rational responses.<sup>6</sup> This brought together the remarkable 'Pernerstorfer circle', members of which later rose to prominence in music, politics, academia and the arts. Alongside Engelbert Pernerstorfer and Viktor Adler, who went on respectively to help found the *deutschnational* movement and to lead the Social Democratic party, there was the historian Heinrich Friedjung, and the composer Gustav Mahler, then a penniless student at the Conservatory. Also a member was Siegfried Lipiner, a precocious young man whose first literary work, *Der entfesselte Prometheus* (1876), was praised by both Nietzsche and Wagner. Richard von Kralik, whose career will be traced in this and subsequent chapters, met Lipiner in 1877 and through him was

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<sup>6</sup> William J. McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974).

introduced to the rest of the circle, which met regularly in Vienna for several years.

Richard Kralik, Edler von Meyrswalden, was born on 1 October 1852 in the Bohemian town of Eleonorenhain (Lenora). His family had acquired their patent of nobility along with considerable wealth in the previous two generations, when his father and maternal grandfather had been among the pioneers of the Bohemian glass-blowing industry. Family life was, by Kralik's own admission, not especially religious; his autobiography *Tage und Werke* (1922) gives more space to the impact of the Bohemian forests on his impressionable young mind than to any early experience of a conventionally religious nature. In 1856 the family moved to Linz where he completed his school education. Kralik then attended the University of Vienna, qualifying as a Doctor of Law in 1876. A gifted young man with diverse literary and cultural interests, he persuaded his parents to support him for a short time while he travelled in pursuit of these interests, after which he intended to take up a career as an academic lawyer. This never happened, for Kralik convinced his family in the meantime that his real talent lay elsewhere, and the inheritance he received after his father's death in 1877 enabled him to commit himself fully to a literary career.

Whereas, in the 1880s, the other members of the Pernerstorfer circle all seemed to make a choice between politics and art, Kralik's radicalism took on a distinctly original character, insofar as he formed a concept of Dionysian theatre that, contrary to McGrath's view, did make significant impact on subsequent political and cultural history. It was not an aesthete's refuge from the problems of a changing society but a politician's answer to them, a form of populism that sought to mould the populace into a *Volk* rather than just defending its material and democratic rights. By the middle of the decade Kralik reached the conviction that a cultural revival was needed and that, if it was to bind and unify, it had to be founded on a common Christian faith and a clear national identity. This cultural objective led him to the idea of the world as a theatre stage on which God allots each individual his role, and to his personal Roman Catholic faith. If one looks more closely at Kralik's early intellectual environment, it is possible to see the basis from which these beliefs developed.

The starting-point was a profound dissatisfaction with recent political history. Born in the 1850s, the students of the 1870s had grown up with the dream of a unified Germany in which Austria would play a commanding role.

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Kralik writes: 'Ich lege großen Wert darauf, noch als Angehöriger des ehemaligen "Deutschen Bundes" (1. Oktober 1852) in dem von jeher zum Deutschen Reich gehörigen Kurland Böhmen geboren zu sein.'<sup>7</sup> Whilst the *Altliberalen* under Schmerling were in power (1859–65), unification still looked to be on the political agenda. However, Austria soon found itself in what many saw as a civil war with its Prussian neighbour and, after the defeat at Königgrätz, was obliged to accept equal partnership with Hungary in a dual monarchy and exclusion from the North German Federation, which Bismarck set up in 1867. As in the era of Weimar classicism, the idea of the German *Kulturstaat* gained popularity not only because it compensated for political schisms but because it offered the idealist a long-term solution to them. Kralik and his friends cultivated their dream of a *Großdeutschland* in Wagner's dramatic works and cultural ideology. The cosmic theatrical vision of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* replaced German history, in truth a sad tale of fragmentation, power politics and stubborn parochialism, with a mythical explanation of the origins of the Germanic people that stressed racial unity and historical grandeur. To all who were prepared to suspend disbelief, Wagner offered a shared tradition in the past, a sense of community in the present, and a common destiny in the future.

The need for a cultural revival that should work through individuals at every level of society seemed all the more urgent in the 1870s because social and political institutions inspired less confidence than ever. Successive political and diplomatic crises seemed to suggest that under liberalism Austria had lost its moral backbone: during the Franco-Prussian War the country maintained an uneasy neutrality, thus implicitly supporting France rather than its fellow Germans; the stock-market collapse in 1873 revealed the illusory nature of the new wealth; whilst the acquittal of Ofenheim, a particularly unscrupulous entrepreneur, two years later confirmed the suspicion that traditional moral values were no longer respected. Rapid industrial growth, increased social mobility, improved communications and the strikingly cosmopolitan atmosphere in the capital city all contributed to the marginalization of national culture. Wagner aside, culture was seen as a luxury item; it pandered to the tastes of a commercially minded bourgeoisie who wanted to be entertained after a hard day's work, not educated or improved. Theatre audiences not only clamoured

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<sup>7</sup> Kralik, 'Literarische Selbstporträts I: Richard von Kralik', *Der Gral*, 2 (1907–08), 10–17 (p. 11).

for light fare but wanted something more sophisticated than the characteristically Viennese *Volkstheater*. For this reason, and also because the audience for local dialect drama had been diluted by immigration, the *Volkstheater* went into decline, its place filled largely by imported forms, such as operetta, French farce and salon comedy. Kralik, like many of his generation, was inspired to creativity by the feeling 'daß die Kunst der Gegenwart und der nächsten Vergangenheit gar nicht zu jenem hohen Kulturideal stimmte, das mir doch die Geschichte und die Ästhetik bot'.<sup>8</sup>

Earlier in the nineteenth century Austrian liberalism had made some attempt to address social questions; now the rapacious capitalism of the *Ringstraße* era ignored the widespread misery and deprivation it was causing. Given this atmosphere, it is not surprising that the Pernerstorfer circle, including Kralik for a time, inclined towards radical socialism. Here, as in their appreciation of Wagner, politics and aesthetics went hand in hand. In Marx's theories they found another gigantic myth, an explanation of the monumental processes of world history that was aesthetically attractive in its all-inclusiveness and, almost by extension, politically convincing. The political aspect of this indeed became dominant for Adler and Pernerstorfer, but they remained radical idealists, inspired by a communitarian vision. Because this vision extended into a realm far beyond present realities, the term 'Metapolitik', once used in the *Bayreuther Blätter* to describe Wagner's cultural ideology, reappears in this context and was indeed used by Pernerstorfer himself.<sup>9</sup> The analogy is not only to metaphysics but also to metatheatre. The spectator at the political rally, like his compatriot in the theatre, cannot reach the 'other' realm if he relies purely on his rational responses, but must be prepared to give his spiritual and emotional instincts free rein. The notion of political stagecraft, channelling individual responses towards a common experience, is, of course, an ominous one and points towards the Nazis' transformation of politics into mass theatre.

Those members of the Pernerstorfer circle who devoted themselves to the arts mirrored the politicians in rejecting small-scale realism, the art form of individualist culture, in favour of huge mythical or cosmic perspectives that clearly aspired to the grandeur and totality of Wagner's vision. The influence of Wagner's metaphysics, pushing back the world of appearances to reveal the primordial reality beneath it, can, for example, be discerned in Mahler's

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<sup>8</sup> Kralik, 'Literarische Selbstporträts I', p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria*, pp. 183–84.

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symphonic works. Lipiner actually met Wagner in 1878. A Polish Jew, he demonstrated his desire for assimilation by changing his name from Salomo to Siegfried and later also converting to Catholicism. His first literary production, *Der entfesselte Prometheus* (1876), combines Greek and Christian myth in a symbolic epic depicting the Titan who breaks free of divine control and comes to earth, only to discover the depths to which humanity has sunk. This glorification of the Fall is followed by a new redemption as Prometheus encounters Christ and sacrifices himself for coming generations. The renunciation motif and the blend of mythologies are pure Wagner; the sovereign individual owes a debt not only to Goethe's Prometheus but also to Nietzsche, who was one of many to praise the work, although rebuffing Lipiner's brash attempts to make personal contact with him.<sup>10</sup> Kralik, for his part, turned away from political activism in 1880 and began to reformulate his politics in a metaphysical aesthetic, the core of which was the idea of life as theatre. This was to become a major thread running through his work in philosophy, drama and history. Although he liked to present it as a static concept, his thinking in fact developed over the years, only gradually becoming compatible with orthodox Catholicism.

Tracing the stages of his intellectual development as he wishes the public to remember them in *Tage und Werke* (1922), Kralik highlights the discovery of the world theatre metaphor as the turning-point in his life, and thereby makes clear how important it subsequently became. But his fictionalized account claims that his personal faith is and always has been founded on the idea of life as a piece of theatre, played out beneath the gaze of a divine spectator-judge. He recalls how this supposedly came to him on 20 June 1880, not mediated by the literary tradition of the *theatrum mundi* but as a personal epiphany:

Da kam mir eines schönen Tages [...] plötzlich im Gespräch wie eine blitzartige Erleuchtung der Gedanke, der mir alle Widersprüche, alle Rätsel der Welt zu lösen schien, der Gedanke, daß das Dasein ein Wettkampf, ein Wettspiel der Kinder Gottes sei, angestellt, daß jeder persönlich sich unter allen Bedingungen vor Gott bewähre und Lob oder Tadel finde.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See Hubert Lengauer, 'Siegfried Lipiner: Biographie im Zeichen des Prometheus', in *Die österreichische Literatur: Ihr Profil von der Jahrhundertwende bis zur Gegenwart (1880–1980)*, ed. by Herbert Zeman (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1989), pp. 1227–46.

<sup>11</sup> Kralik, *Tage und Werke: Lebenserinnerungen* (Vienna: Vogelsang, 1922), p. 79.

Looking back, Kralik sees Schopenhauer and Wagner, Darwin and Nietzsche as the poles of nineteenth-century culture, the first pair claiming that the only victory over life's trials is in renouncing it of one's own volition, the second that it is possible for the strong to triumph over adversity by their individual efforts. The theocentric world theatre retains the competitive, Darwinistic element, thereby restoring a purpose to life, but adds a moral imperative to play along to the best of one's abilities, whatever they may be. Developing this thought Kralik, like Hofmannsthal in *Der Tor und der Tod*, presents the idea of life as theatre in the hands of the actor as an improvement on the image of life as a printed book which the subject merely reads. Although there is greater psychological subtlety in Claudio, who has forgotten how the book began and is irritated by not knowing how it ends, both writers reject the passivity of the reader who assumes that his lifestory is already written by 'der große Weltendichter' in favour of the actor judged on his individual performance.

In *Tage und Werke* Kralik is anxious to show that the insight not only changed his life but could and did change the lives of others. He relates how, shortly after his own experience, he received a letter from a despondent American travelling companion, who was about to return home after a lengthy European tour and facing an uncertain future. Kralik wrote back telling of his revelation and was soon rewarded by an enthusiastic letter of thanks. Supposedly with the encouragement of other Viennese friends, he transposed the substance of the letter into verse and published it under the title *Offenbarung* (1883). If one looks at the actual text of *Offenbarung*, one discovers that it presents a creation myth that is in fact Platonic rather than Christian and also contains a strong Germanic emphasis. Furthermore, it is intended to be a means of psychological transformation rather than to encourage any form of collective sentiment. In the prologue the poet has a symbolic encounter with two ravens. One is Wodan's memory and flies back to the very beginnings of time; the other represents his thoughts and flies forwards without ever reaching the end. From them the poet learns that in the beginning there were only gods who sat together in heaven and led a pleasurable and harmonious existence. Suddenly tiring of this, they experienced the perverse desire to know 'Die Wonnen alle des Schmerzes und der Leiden Lust'.<sup>12</sup> To this end they decided to build themselves a 'Spielplatz', the world, as a place where those who

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<sup>12</sup> Kralik, *Offenbarung* (Vienna: Konegen, 1883), p. 11.

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wished could test their fortitude in friendly combat with each other. The games became theatre because those who remained in heaven scrutinized their performance, deriding any individual who lost his self-respect in the face of adversity.

The competitive element is central both to *Offenbarung* and to the account given in *Tage und Werke*, but in the earlier work the Olympic competitors reveal themselves as Olympian gods, thus making the uplifting message very different:

Muß ich dich erst gemahnen an das, was dir entfiel?  
Weißt du's, wir sind ja Götter, die Welt ist unser Spiel!  
Ist dir so ganz verschwunden, wie in dem Himmel dort  
Wir einst beisammen saßen? Da war nicht Zeit noch Ort.  
Wir waren frei vom Zwange, von allem Schicksalsnetz,  
Uns selber nur zum Zwecke, uns selber zum Gesetz.  
Das waren edle Schaaren, das war ein herrlich Reich!  
Ein jeder Fürst und König und jeder jedem gleich.<sup>13</sup>

In this passage from *Offenbarung* Man is not an actor among many, meekly playing the role that is assigned to him, but a young god who has chosen to take part in the game of life because he wishes to test his courage to the limit; he knows that if he battles valiantly he will be welcomed back into the heavenly fold afterwards, whatever the outcome. Kralik hopes that this mythical perspective will raise the spirits of his friend, effectively giving him the self-confidence of a Nietzschean *Übermensch*.

Kralik takes pains to make his comforting fiction logically consistent. Hence he explains why he, as a poet, stands above the 'Kampfspiel' and knows its mythical origins, whilst his troubled friend has no inkling of them. He claims that those gods who decided to participate in the game of life were given a drink which effaced all memories of their divine origins. He only pretended to drain the cup and is therefore a second Prometheus, able to reveal the secrets of the gods. However, the thoroughness with which Kralik constructs his mythical universe leads him to put forward a number of propositions which are so ludicrous as to make one wonder whether *Offenbarung* is not really intended as a parody of Wagnerian myth-making. Several sections anticipate possible objections by the reader: for example, faced with the scepticism engendered by the deterministic world-view, Kralik asserts that

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<sup>13</sup> Kralik, *Offenbarung*, p. 5.

in his 'Spielwelt' the principle of free will operates on a cosmic scale. The laws of science and nature are swept away as everyone and everything is free to do just as he, she or it pleases. The sun would not have to rise each morning if it did not wish to do so and only keeps to its usual course because it enjoys playing the game. In an orgy of anthropomorphism, Kralik declares that Mother Earth too is suffering from man's perpetual digging and delving and that her groans and murmurs may be heard in Romantic 'Waldeseinsamkeit', in babbling brooks and in the whispering of the wind in the trees.<sup>14</sup> Realizing also that the fair sex can play no active part in what is basically a male heroic fantasy, Kralik assigns to woman the supporting role of 'Kampfeswärter'. The text again verges on the ridiculous as he asserts: 'Walküren sind sie Alle, keine ein menschlich Weib.'<sup>15</sup> Kralik outlaws sympathy since this leads only to self-pity, and issues the perplexing commandment to love one's enemy, but also to love his death.

Typically for Kralik, the patriotic principle also finds a place in *Offenbarung*. National loyalty becomes more intense because the gods who come to earth choose the flag under which they fight, having evaluated the country's beauty and potential for greatness from their lofty vantage point. Hence it is an informed decision rather than a random attachment. He advocates, somewhat disturbingly, that the principle of open competition should also be allowed to operate at the level of international relations.

Kein Maß ist dir [meinem Vaterland] gemessen, die Schranke nicht gesteckt,  
Du magst den Arm ausstrecken, so weit dein Arm sich reckt.  
Fürcht' dich vor keinem Gegner. Was sollt' zu fürchten sein?  
Wenn du dich nur nicht fürchtest, so ist die Erde dein.<sup>16</sup>

One might read this as implicitly championing Austro-German expansionism.

Kralik's reflections on the role and status of the poet in *Offenbarung* and his need to justify renouncing active engagement in favour of art support intimations in *Tage und Werke* that the period around 1880 was a traumatic time in his life. The seventh section describes the poet as a sad and lonely figure, leading a half-life on the periphery of the world's tournament ground; the statement that 'Das Leben ist wohl Schein; / Die Dichtung aber Wahrheit; Festes giebt sie allein' appears as a forlorn attempt to convince himself that the

<sup>14</sup> Kralik, *Offenbarung*, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

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poet's unique insights are sufficient compensation for this.<sup>17</sup> The tone becomes more positive as Kralik perceives the poet's role as a priestly one, but there are dangerous overtones of the Tasso-complex when he asserts that the poet is as valuable a member of society as the warrior and equally deserving of the laurel wreath.

It is possible to see the vision of *Offenbarung* either as a triumph of aristocratic individualism or as Kralik's desperate attempt to find something to believe in after he had become disillusioned with socialism. Certainly, he took it very seriously at the time, telling his childhood friend Anton Bettelheim: 'das ist jetzt meine Religion, [...] dass wir die Götter sind und die Welt unser Turnierplatz';<sup>18</sup> but a note of despondency creeps into the same letter as he states, 'auch auf der Erde haben wir nichts zu schaffen, keine Mission, nichts zu erstreben, es ist undenkbar dass es im Wesen anders werden könnte'.<sup>19</sup> This version of the *theatrum mundi* is not rooted in positive faith but in a Schopenhauerian pessimism which caused consternation amongst Kralik's friends; it grows out of the miserable belief that suffering is the most fundamental characteristic of human life and that individual endeavour cannot bring about any lasting improvement.

Denn nichts hat dieses Treiben mit Weisheit hier zu thun.  
Wer es verbessern wollte, der ließ' es besser ruhn.  
Denn nur auf leichte Thorheit ist alles abgezielt.  
Der Ernst ist nicht am Platze dort wo nur wird gespielt.  
Was trösten und was helfen! Für Mitleid ist kein Ort.  
Was neue Reiche gründen! Bald zieh'n wir wieder fort.<sup>20</sup>

In this way Kralik justifies solipsism and brushes social problems to one side. It is to some extent a legacy of this period that Kralik, unlike many Austrian Catholics in the late nineteenth century, never gave them a great deal of

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<sup>17</sup> Kralik, *Offenbarung*, p. 15.

<sup>18</sup> Kralik, letter to Anton Bettelheim, 31 October 1880: Kralik-Nachlaß in the Handschriftensammlung of the Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek, I.N. 180.950, pp. 1–8 (pp. 6–7).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> Kralik, *Offenbarung*, pp. 27–28. McGrath pinpoints this crisis in Kralik's life as 'a failure of nerve on the issue of life's meaningfulness' (*Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria*, pp. 97–98) but, strangely, does not consult the actual text of *Offenbarung* and is therefore unable to take account of what Kralik sets in the place of socialism.

attention.<sup>21</sup> Instead, he took the view that imaginative, aesthetic transformation (in *Offenbarung* of the individual, later of the whole populace) had to precede material improvement and was, indeed, the more pressing concern.

In socialism Kralik had looked for a substitute religion for himself rather than social justice for others, and even amused himself by composing a number of socialist hymns. At the time of writing *Offenbarung* he half-jokingly refers to himself as a 'Religionsstifter';<sup>22</sup> this text gives a foretaste not only of his propensity for extravagant myth-making but also of the need for metaphysics which subsequently led him to Catholicism. An initially indiscriminate enthusiasm for transforming reality in an aesthetic rather than a material sense was the impulse behind a short-lived Wiener Sagen-Gesellschaft (1881–83) which Kralik founded together with Mahler and Lipiner. Its motto, according to Kralik, was: 'Lebt froh nach altem Ritus, wie es freiem Sinn gefällt, / Denn das Leben ist ein Mythos, und ein Mythos ist die Welt!'<sup>23</sup> The *theatrum mundi* is one such myth, and by the time he writes *Tage und Werke* (1922) Kralik is long convinced of its objective validity; but in the early 1880s *Offenbarung* was one of many texts read out before the Sagen-Gesellschaft, a man-made consolation rather than a pious devotional tract.

Contrary to what Kralik wrote forty years later, there was no firm Christian basis to his early experiments with the metaphor of the world as theatre. *Offenbarung* is indeed so reliant on the Germanic cult of heroism that in 1907 the *Heimatsdichter* Friedrich Lienhard thought it permissible to include excerpts in his series *Wege nach Weimar*.<sup>24</sup> Christ figures in the text only briefly and in blasphemous fashion: he was the god who took the greatest shame and suffering upon himself, but for his own perverse gratification rather than for the benefit of others. The unpublished essay 'Moltke und Richard Wagner', written around 1880, reveals that Kralik was aware of the Christian concept of world theatre but felt no affinity with it:

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<sup>21</sup> The authoritative work on this subject is Alfred Diamant, *Austrian Catholics and the First Republic: Democracy, Capitalism and the Social Order, 1918–1934* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960). Diamant only mentions Kralik very briefly (pp. 125–27), placing him in the Romantic tradition of 'Sozialreform' which was associated with Karl von Vogelsang and advocated a return to the feudal model of society as a solution to social problems.

<sup>22</sup> Kralik, letter to Anton Bettelheim, 31 October 1880, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Kralik, *Tage und Werke*, p. 99.

<sup>24</sup> Friedrich Lienhard, *Wege nach Weimar*, 6 vols (Stuttgart: Greiner & Pfeiffer, 1906–08), IV, 180–83.

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Wenn die diesseitige Welt nur Schein ist, so kann sie nicht Selbstzweck sein, sie kann nur ein Spielplatz sein für die ewigen Geister, die die Gesetze derselben auf eine kurze Zeit, um ihr Geschick zu erfüllen, auf sich nehmen. Auch nach christlicher Auffassung ist sie folgerichtig nur der Kampfplatz der streitenden Kirche, der Prüfungsort der Seelen. Nur der Einzelne hat sein ewiges Schicksal; die Welt als ganzes gehört dem Teufel.<sup>25</sup>

This explicitly denies the existence of a divine plan; even if God did make the world, the cultural and political crises of the 1870s suggested to Kralik and many others of his generation that he had left it to the devil. Furthermore, the assertion of individualism and self-reliance in Kralik's final sentence prefigures the solipsism of Hofmannsthal's *Das kleine Welttheater*, where the Madman too holds that 'Schicksal aber hat nur der einzelne' (W3 148).

#### *From 'Die Jungen' to 'Jung Wien'*

Underlying continuities in late-nineteenth-century intellectual history create important parallels between Kralik's generation, sometimes referred to as 'Die Jungen', and the emergent literati of 'Jung Wien'. These continuities, which include a fascination with forms of the *theatrum mundi* topos, help to explain certain similarities in attitude between the young Hofmannsthal and the young Kralik.

As both McGrath and Schorske have realized, the linking factor between the 1870s and the 1890s is the emergence of a generation of young intellectuals alienated from liberal culture and, with the assistance of Nietzsche, rediscovering the power of irrational instinct.<sup>26</sup> Whereas 'Die Jungen' of the 1870s felt angry that their elders had failed to achieve the ideals of liberalism and sought, at least initially, for alternative political solutions, twenty years later reforming energy had given way to an elegiac sadness, a feeling that public life was beyond redemption. This manifested itself as a flight into aestheticism, accompanied by a predilection for works with historical settings, especially those of Austria's pre-industrial *Biedermeierzeit*. Whereas Kralik's contempor-

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<sup>25</sup> Kralik, 'Moltke und Richard Wagner', Kralik-Nachlaß in the Handschriftensammlung of the Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek, I.N. 105.478, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> William J. McGrath, "'Volksseelenpolitik" and Psychological Rebirth: Mahler and Hofmannsthal', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 4 (1973-74), 53-72, relates Hofmannsthal to the Dionysian culture of the 1870s, while Schorske establishes a connection between McGrath's work and his own in Carl E. Schorske, 'Generational Tension and Cultural Change: Reflections on the Case of Vienna', *Dædalus* (Fall 1978), pp. 111-22.

aries encouraged non-rational responses as a means of creating a sense of folk community, the aesthetes of the 1890s were content to give free rein to this 'Dionysian' aspect of the psyche in their private lives. Thus, in the space of two decades, the *theatrum mundi* became the theatre of the mind, cultic festival gave way to lyrical drama, public myths to private ones.

Hofmannsthal's essay on 'Maurice Barrès' (1891) makes clear that he was aware of these connections, between the mystical core of nationalist 'Volks-seelenpolitik' (RA1 121–22) and the pseudo-mystical self-absorption of the aesthete. When he writes in that essay, 'es gibt eine volkstümliche Entwicklung, die man fördern, eine populäre Strömung, in der man sich gesundbaden, eine nationale, unbestimmt strebende, instinktiv tastende Partei, der man sich anschließen kann' (RA1 122), he could be describing any of the mass parties that had grown out of the radicalism of the 1870s. Barrès is, however, beyond populism: *Sous l'œil des barbares*, *Un Homme libre* and *Le Jardin de Bérénice* are symbolic narratives presenting 'Le culte du moi', a quasi-aristocratic outlook on life which their author considers appropriate to the modern world. Using the language of Catholic theology, Barrès offers his insights as a private religion, a means to wrest control over one's life and destiny.

Although, in *Das kleine Welttheater*, Hofmannsthal does not proselytize in the manner of either Barrès or Kralik, and is content to explore the imaginative world of the poet as an alternative form of *Welttheater*, it is nevertheless fair to say that *Offenbarung* is to Kralik what *Das kleine Welttheater* is to Hofmannsthal. Both are early works which reject traditional forms of *Welttheater* in favour of a private mysticism, male fantasies in which woman plays a distinctly subordinate role. This mysticism, founded in *Offenbarung* on Platonism and in *Das kleine Welttheater* on Neo-Platonism, points to a common need for metaphysics. Like Hofmannsthal's lyrical dramas, *Offenbarung* is the product of an individualistic and quasi-aristocratic vision that was intended not to bind together a large and socially disparate group but to reinforce the identity and reflect the concerns of a cultural and social elite. One might also add that, try as they might, neither Hofmannsthal nor Kralik entirely managed to remove the taint of elitism from their cultural activities. As a result, both later resorted to creating the *Volk* out of what was in reality a small and unrepresentative section of it.

That the young Hofmannsthal, like Kralik, had more faith in psychological rebirth than in any form of communitarianism is most evident in a letter which he wrote in 1895 to Edgar Karg von Bebenburg. As with *Offenbarung* the

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addressee was a despondent traveller, a naval officer on a long voyage. In response to a query about recent political developments, Hofmannsthal wrote:

Über diese Dinge, was man so gewöhnlich die sociale Frage nennt, hört man recht viel reden, oberflächliches Zeug, auch besseres, aber alles so entfernt und unlebendig, wie wenn man durch ein Fernrohr von ganz weit einer Gamsherde grasen zusieht; es kommt einem gar nicht wie wirklich vor. Was es 'wirklich' ist, weiß wohl auch niemand, weder die drin stecken, noch gar die 'oberen Schichten'. Das 'Volk' kenne ich nicht. Es gibt, glaub ich, kein Volk, sondern, bei uns wenigstens, nur Leut, und zwar sehr verschiedene Leut, auch unter den armen sehr verschiedene, mit ganz verschiedenen inneren Welten.<sup>27</sup>

Hofmannsthal rejects socialism on the grounds that it imposes a false homogeneity on the lower classes. He defends the richness of character which he believes to exist in every individual, regardless of social class, and sets the wealth and variety of these inner worlds against the supposed uniformity of the masses. For this reason, he continues, any form of social change must take place deep within each individual; the only way to transform, or indeed to represent, 'das ganze Spiel der Welt' is, paradoxically, to concentrate on the individual. The closing words of the letter make clear that these views were little short of a personal credo: 'Ich wollt das einmal alles niederschreiben, erstens weils mein Glauben ist, dann auch weils Dir vielleicht doch etwas sagt.'<sup>28</sup> The belief in the individual as a world in himself is, of course, the basis of *Das kleine Welttheater*, and a faith in Man's spiritual resources will inform Hofmannsthal's treatment of the revolutionary threat represented by the Beggar in *Das Salzburger große Welttheater*.

It is perhaps a reflection of their common alienation from public affairs that the notion of 'play' as the starting-point for much human activity is important to both Kralik and Hofmannsthal and, as Chapter Five will show, is also fundamental to Max Reinhardt's concept of theatre. To some extent also a legacy of Nietzsche's assertion that life is only justified as an aesthetic phenomenon, the emphasis on 'play' significantly reduces the importance of the ethical dimension. Hofmannsthal, for example, is fascinated with the lifestyle of the 'playboy' adventurer and captures both its charm and its dangers in the performance of the clown Furlani who balances a flower vase on his head 'aus purer Begeisterung und Seligkeit darüber, daß er ihn so schön balancieren kann' (W12 68), but lets it fall for the same reason. Kralik's

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<sup>27</sup> Hofmannsthal – Karg, *Briefwechsel*, p. 80: Hofmannsthal to Karg, 18 June 1895.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

*Offenbarung* elevates 'play' to a cosmic principle and, although his understanding of the world theatre metaphor gradually acquires the moralistic accent necessary to make it compatible with orthodox Catholicism, he retains a lifelong fascination with 'play' as a philosophical proposition and as the essential nature of all cultural activity.<sup>29</sup>

While Hofmannsthal writes of Max Reinhardt 'für kein Wesen, das ich kenne, hat der Doppelsinn des Wortes "spielen" [...] so sehr seine tiefe Bedeutung bewahrt wie für ihn' (RA2 298), Kralik expounds the history of what he terms his 'Spielbegriff' at length in a work entitled *Weltweisheit* (1894–96); it is an important part of his biography of Socrates (1899), intended partly to repair the damage done by Nietzsche; and he devotes further articles to it in the years leading up to the First World War. Kralik's exploration of the subject is not academically rigorous but nevertheless offers valuable insights into the continuity between his generation and Hofmannsthal's, especially if it is set alongside Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (first published in Dutch in 1944 and in English in 1949), the best known modern work on the subject. Their approaches and definitions are surprisingly similar: Huizinga starts from a philological standpoint, showing that in many languages the designations for play and games, for competitive and ritual actions are interrelated; although restricting himself to German, Kralik does much the same, opening the essay 'Zur Philosophie des Spieles' (1914) with eight full pages of idiomatic phrases and literary quotations in which the word and its cognates appear. They also define the concept similarly: Kralik writes of 'eine Tätigkeit, die man nicht um eines Resultats oder eines praktischen Zwecks, eines Bedürfnisses willen, sondern zum eigenen Genügen übt'.<sup>30</sup> Huizinga calls it:

a free activity standing quite consciously outside 'ordinary' life as being 'not serious', but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with

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<sup>29</sup> Doppler's study of Kralik's ideas is unsatisfactory, insofar as it makes no mention of the world theatre metaphor: Bernhard Doppler, "'Ich habe diesen Krieg immer sozusagen als meinen Krieg angesehen": Der katholische Kulturkritiker Richard von Kralik (1852–1934)' in *Österreich und der große Krieg 1914–1918: Die andere Seite der Geschichte*, ed. by Klaus Amann and Hubert Lengauer (Vienna: Brandstätter, 1989), pp. 95–104.

<sup>30</sup> Kralik, 'Zur Philosophie des Spiels', *Die Kultur*, 15 (1914), 146–63 (p. 154); see also Kralik, 'Der Begriff des Spieles in der Weltliteratur', *Die Kultur*, 12 (1911), 26–48.

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no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner.<sup>31</sup>

George Steiner's verdict that Huizinga's work is 'the anecdotal discourse of an erudite, somewhat crotchety amateur', is, however, even more applicable to Kralik.<sup>32</sup> As if trying to match the universality of the Marxist world-view, Kralik makes no attempt to restrict his definition of *Spiel*, therefore taking in everything from the harmony of the spheres to the idea of life as a 'Glücksspiel'; Schiller's concept of the 'Spieltrieb' is mentioned; Shakespeare's world theatre appears without comment alongside Calderón's; St Augustine rubs shoulders with St Paul.

Whatever Huizinga's failings, he draws the important conclusion that the ludic element in culture, to which he attributes its sacral character and its position above everyday concerns, was severely undermined in the nineteenth century, when 'all Europe donned the boiler-suit'.<sup>33</sup> Bourgeois and socialist ideologies are inimical to a mode of activity which is most suited to ritualized and hierarchic models of society; they therefore tend to drive it out of the public sphere. As already ascertained, this led certain individuals around 1900 to indulge the ludic instinct all the more vigorously in their private lives, sometimes raising it to the status of a substitute religion. In one particular case, which has significant connection to Hofmannsthal, this seems to have been inspired by Kralik's *Offenbarung*.

In 1897 a book appeared with the title *Grundlegung der neusokratischen Philosophie*. Its author, Heinrich Gomperz, a friend and contemporary of Hofmannsthal, set out the credo of a group of young men in Vienna who called themselves 'Neusokratiker'. Taking Plato's depiction of Socrates as a starting-point, their first belief was that 'für einen guten Mann gibt es kein Uebel, weder im Leben noch im Tode'. Material privations, suffering and death were all surface occurrences which made no impact on a good man's innermost being. Life was therefore to be lived as if one were playing a game; and when human activity was surveyed as a whole it appeared as 'nicht nur ein grosses Schauspiel, sondern auch ein grosses Kampfspiel'.<sup>34</sup> The echoes of Kralik's

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<sup>31</sup> Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, with an introduction by George Steiner (London: Paladin, 1970), p. 32.

<sup>32</sup> George Steiner, introduction to Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, pp. 9–16 (p. 14).

<sup>33</sup> Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, p. 218.

<sup>34</sup> Heinrich Gomperz, *Grundlegung der neusokratischen Philosophie* (Leipzig and Vienna: Deuticke, 1897), pp. 1, 154.

*Offenbarung* are unmistakable, and Gomperz's preface acknowledges a debt not only to Schopenhauer but also to Kralik and to Alfred von Berger.<sup>35</sup> Reviewers saw the *Grundlegung der neusokratischen Philosophie*, which aroused considerable interest when it first appeared, as epitomizing the outlook of 'Jung Wien'.<sup>36</sup> Bahr, for example, glorified it as 'das Gefühl des reinen Artisten' and compared it with the wisdom of Jaques' 'seven ages of man' speech; Rudolph Lothar pointed out its similarity to the ethos of Hofmannsthal's lyrical dramas:

Es ist nicht Zufall, daß diese neusokratische Lehre mit dem Auftreten der Wiener Moderne, die in Loris, in Hugo v. Hofmannsthal, wie er eigentlich heißt, einen Propheten sah, zusammenfällt. Es sind verwandte Erscheinungen. Ihr leiser, aristokratischer Snobismus ist wie eine Reaction gegen die demokratische Sturmfluth, eine Reaction, der aber bei uns keine Revolution voranging [...].

Auch für Hofmannsthal ist das Leben nur Theater.<sup>37</sup>

Neither Hofmannsthal nor Kralik was, however, to stop at reaction; both were to progress to a form of conservative reconstruction, attempting to stem the democratic tide by reviving traditional notions of folk community. Just as Hofmannsthal was ultimately to pin his hopes on the special nature of festival theatre, so Kralik prized national culture too highly to see its ludic element simply slip away and decided that it would be strengthened by renewing its attachment to the Catholic Church. However, as with his socialism and his subsequent quest for an aesthetic means to transform the present, Kralik's interest in forms of religious drama was a generational response which developed into a personal crusade.

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<sup>35</sup> Both Gomperz and Berger seem to have encouraged Hofmannsthal to think in these terms: see (RA3 364) and (RA3 435–36).

<sup>36</sup> See Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, 'Das Fin de siècle — Ende eines Bildungsideals? Zur Antiken-Rezeption im Kreis des "Jung Wien"', *Neohelicon*, 9, ii (1982), 61–85, especially pp. 70–75. Schmidt-Dengler does not, however, investigate the connection with Kralik.

<sup>37</sup> Hermann Bahr, 'Sokrates', *Die Zeit*, 12 (1897), 12–13 (p. 12); Rudolph Lothar, 'Hugo von Hofmannsthal', *Die Wage*, 2 (1899), 210–12 (p. 211). Both articles are reprinted in *Das junge Wien*, 2 vols, ed. by Gotthart Wunberg (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1976), II, 751–55 (p. 753), 979–84 (pp. 980–81).

*Trends in Cosmic Drama*

*Not least of his labours is the considering of new plays [...]. I remember one which was sent in by a Municipal Office from the North, or the Lowlands, called 'The Birth of the Cosmos'. The curtain in the first scene of the first act was directed to go up on 'vapours which rolled about the stage and finally shaped themselves into great globes'. Then a vast figure appears in the dim distance, which is the Almighty, 'speaking through a megaphone'. Mr Tree wrote back and said he was afraid the resources of his theatre did not extend to the creation of worlds, but recommended another ambitious manager who might be likely to try and mount the piece.<sup>38</sup>*

Taken from an early biography of the British actor and theatre director Herbert Beerbohm Tree, this anecdote gives an impression of the enormous appeal held by world theatre based on myth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; it was a natural choice of form for any dramatist with a strong philosophical or idealist bent. At its best, it could be a mentally challenging and emotionally compelling theatrical experience which reached into the everyday lives of the audience; at its worst, it was likely to be derivative, rely on abstruse symbolism and reveal only the intellectual limitations or eccentricities of its creator. Rudolph Lothar's mystery play *Der Werth des Lebens* (1892) fell into the latter category when it tried to improve on Goethe's *Faust*: one reviewer concluded that it would have been better had the play never been written, since it only illustrated 'wie grausam man das herrliche Goethe'sche Original karikieren kann'.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to the established model of Goethe's *Faust*, Wagner's *Ring* cycle provided an almost irresistible challenge. However, Wagner's work achieved what it set out to do so well that the imitations invariably pale in comparison, and many more works in that mould were planned than completed. The last twenty years of Lipiner's life were taken up with a 'Christustrilogie' that he hoped would put Wagner and the rest of world literature definitively in the shade. Only the prologue *Adam* was completed and published posthumously in 1913. Kralik also planned a five-part 'Menschheitstragödie' in 1878, again dealing with the myth of original sin, but published only the first part, likewise

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<sup>38</sup> Mrs George Cran, *Herbert Beerbohm Tree* (London: John Lane, 1907), p. 89.

<sup>39</sup> Hans Sittenberger, *Studien zur Dramaturgie der Gegenwart I: Das dramatische Schaffen in Österreich* (Munich: Beck, 1898), p. 253.

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entitled *Adam* (1883). The mythology here cannot have been exclusively Christian since *Adam* was briefly banned on religious grounds. Working in less grandiose but more conventionally Catholic mode in 1906, Kralik wrote an Austrian companion piece to 'Das Rheingold', calling it *Das Donaugold des heiligen Severin*. Eduard Hlatky, a member of Kralik's circle in the 1890s, also modelled his only major dramatic work on the *Ring*. The trilogy *Weltenmorgen* (1896–97) consists of 'Der Sturz der Engel', 'Der Sündenfall', and 'Das erste Opfer'. The action takes place successively in heaven, in paradise and on earth. Like Kralik's *Adam* it requires that the stage be constructed on three levels, in order to express the hierarchical relationship between these settings, as was traditional in medieval mystery plays.

As a rule, dramatists writing mythical world theatre in the 1880s and 1890s showed considerable respect for the biblical narrative. They were still overawed by the bold originality and expressive grandeur of Wagner's mythical syntheses, and were concerned to formulate a response to Nietzsche's assertion that God was dead. But the principle of cosmic drama is as suited to Christian heresies and eccentric private mythologies as it is to doctrinal orthodoxy; and, over the period with which this study is concerned, it was used to spread the word about everything from the Germanic cult of Wotanism to Rosicrucianism. The cosmic mystery play was, for example, taken up by the philosopher Rudolf Steiner in the period shortly before the First World War as a vehicle for his anthroposophical teachings. Under his direction, amateur performers in Munich produced a new mystery play every summer from 1910 to 1913. These productions attracted audiences of around two thousand, most of whom were converts to Steiner's brand of theosophy.

Later writers had often overcome that traditional allegiance to the Christian myth which characterized their predecessors and had gained a more objective understanding of Wagner's methods; but in this situation they often felt the aesthetic, intellectual or spiritual need for a substitute faith to fill the gap. Theodor Däubler and Alfred Mombert, as well as the 'Kosmiker' initially grouped around Stefan George, and the 'Charon' circle around Rudolf Pannwitz, all put together fanciful private cosmogonies that were inspired in part by the alternative mythopoeic vision of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* and given an apocalyptic intensity by the horrors, anticipated and experienced, of the First

World War.<sup>40</sup> For practical reasons alone, few such works were stageable, many more were intellectually impenetrable. However, the idea of life as theatre still found a place in this orgy of subjective mythomania: Mombert's trilogy *Aeon* (1907–11) identifies 'Sfaira', the highest level of human creativity, with untrammelled Promethean play: 'Dichtung ist erst vorhanden, wenn alles Geheimnis, alle Wissenschaft und Religion *Spiel der Welt* geworden sind — *Alles ein Spiel* — Das ist dann: SFAIRA.'<sup>41</sup>

The work of Christian von Ehrenfels (1859–1932) deserves particular attention as a specimen of this genre, both because his development followed the pattern described above, and because his ideas on festival theatre help to place Kralik's views in their contemporary context. A professor of philosophy, first in Vienna and later in Prague, Ehrenfels was a devoted admirer of Wagner's work who is said to have walked from Vienna to Bayreuth for the premiere of *Parsifal*. A student of Franz Brentano, he experimented with a relatively restrained form of world theatre in the 1890s; his early work *Der Kampf des Prometheus* (1893) has in common with Lipiner's *Der entfesselte Prometheus* that it combines the legend of Prometheus with the story of Christ's passion. However, in later years Ehrenfels moved towards a more extremist and fanciful vision, advocating eugenics as the answer to the degeneration caused by industrialization. His *Kosmogonie* (1916) responded to the senseless slaughter of the First World War by elevating this to a metaphysical principle. The remaining men were to become co-creators, furthering God's plan by their own efforts as progenitors.<sup>42</sup>

*Der Kampf des Prometheus*, which its author described as 'die Allegorisierung des Glaubenskampfes einer nach Gotteserkenntnis ringenden Menschenseele', syncretizes elements of Germanic, Christian and Greek myth to produce a lengthy lyrical epic.<sup>43</sup> The text is divided into four parts ('Der Tempelbau', 'Maria', 'Christus', 'Die Kreuzigung') and intended for performance over four evenings. The first part depicts Prometheus's clash with an Old Testament style prophet and his followers and ends with the Titan chained to a rock, not

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<sup>40</sup> Raymond Furness, 'The Cosmic Dimension', in Furness, *The Twentieth Century, 1890–1945* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), pp. 77–109. This ground is covered in less detail in Richard Hamann and Jost Hermand, *Stilkunst um 1900*, Deutsche Kunst und Kultur von der Gründerzeit bis zum Expressionismus, 4 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1967), pp. 121–49.

<sup>41</sup> Theodor Mombert, *Dichtungen*, 3 vols (Munich: Kösel, 1963), III, 290: italics in original.

<sup>42</sup> William M. Johnston, *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History 1848–1938* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 302–07.

<sup>43</sup> Christian von Ehrenfels, *Allegorische Dramen* (Vienna: Konegen, 1895), p. 365.

on a high peak in the Caucasus but in a dank underground chamber; the second part has the immaculate conception of a Maria explicitly descended from Prometheus; part three shows Christ teaching the people and performing miracles. Prometheus and Christ are parallel figures insofar as both suffer on behalf of mankind and are presented in the heroic mode. The final part of *Der Kampf des Prometheus* is strongly influenced by the closing scenes of Goethe's *Faust*. Prometheus, taking on the role of Mephistopheles, leads on a satanic host at the end of the crucifixion and a battle between satanic and angelic forces looks set to ensue. But, at the last minute, as he is about to celebrate the triumph of autonomous humanity, Prometheus is miraculously transformed by the sight of Christ on the cross and falls submissively to his knees. All the other figures who have been antagonistic to the new faith follow his example, thus effectively wiping out the forces of evil.

Castle remarks that the structure and stage techniques of *Der Kampf des Prometheus* are those of the *Ring* but that it is the optimism of *Parsifal* rather than the pessimism of Wotan which carries the day.<sup>44</sup> The crucifixion and, in this text, immediate ascension herald the dawning of a better era, rather than just a *Götterdämmerung*. In his preface Ehrenfels explains what he intended by syncretizing the Promethean and Christian myths and relates *Der Kampf des Prometheus* to its Goethean and Wagnerian models. He claims that 'die Geisteshelden unserer Zeit', Nietzsche and others, one assumes, have thrown off the shackles of the theocentric world view, but that ordinary men and women are still hesitating before this momentous step. The prospect of liberation from 'die Willkür einer überweltlichen Gottesverkündigung' brings with it the fear of striking out alone and into the unknown.<sup>45</sup> Although believing that the fortunes of Prometheus are in the ascendant in the modern world, Ehrenfels reverses the outcome in his tetralogy, thus allowing his reader or spectator to indulge a nostalgia for the security of the world as it once was.

As such, *Der Kampf des Prometheus* can be seen either as an orgy of sentimentalism, glorifying a lost world without wanting to see its restitution, or as a celebration of the imaginative richness fostered by the Christian tradition. Ehrenfels expects the reader to approach his work 'mit offenem Blick für die strahlende [*sic*] Schönheit, mit brünstigem Herzen für die scheidende Liebe', to derive aesthetic pleasure from the encounter rather than

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<sup>44</sup> *Deutsch-Österreichische Literaturgeschichte*, IV, 1593.

<sup>45</sup> Christian von Ehrenfels, 'Der Kampf des Prometheus', *Freie Bühne*, 4 (1893), 330–49, 406–20, 526–42, 646–64 (p. 330).

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looking for an immediate moral or religious message.<sup>46</sup> But what is there in the text itself, rather than in the preface, to point the reader towards this response? There is neither the comedy of Goethe's ironic, anachronistic devil nor the conscious theatricality of his 'Prolog im Himmel', both of which indicate to the reader that Goethe's is not a standard Christian world-view. Ehrenfels's treatment of biblical material is, however, less respectful than one would expect, were it a seriously evangelical passion play. 'Maria' does end with the traditional nativity scene — kings, shepherds, farm animals and all — but it is preceded by an interlude in Prometheus's subterranean prison in which the devil Leviathan, who later appears in the guise of Judas, brings him up to date with earthly news and they agree a Christmas truce, leaving the earth to sleep in heavenly peace for one night before they mount a renewed attack. Here Prometheus, the bringer of fire, is implicitly equated with that other light-bearer, Lucifer. Elsewhere, however, he shows characteristics of a man of the 1890s: sensual, determined to live for the pleasure of the moment, and convinced that if there is a creator-god, then all his instincts and desires must be god-given and can therefore be indulged without restraint.

'Christus' differs from a traditional passion play insofar as it makes no attempt to be a faithful account of the life of Christ. Ehrenfels's text is a patchwork of incidents, miracles, and familiar quotations, often placed in an unfamiliar context. Mary Magdalene is raised from the dead instead of Lazarus, water is turned to wine on no special occasion and St John the Baptist is conflated with St John the Evangelist and St Peter to become Johannes, a representative disciple, still alive to witness the crucifixion. This functions as an irreverent shorthand, assuming that the reader or spectator will fill in what is omitted, rather than contributing to the characterization of a revered figure. The sense of time and place remains deliberately indeterminate: the ritual in the temple has a faintly Greek flavour; Prometheus, club in hand, has something of Hercules; and the absence of Romans means that the high priest alone passes judgement on Christ. What seals Christ's fate is the crowd, which turns against him when he announces that his kingdom is not of this world. The syncretistic approach makes clear that, for all its nostalgic qualities, a play such as *Der Kampf des Prometheus* was written primarily for a secular audience and expected little more than cultural attachment to either the Greek or the Christian myth.

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<sup>46</sup> Ehrenfels, 'Der Kampf des Prometheus', p. 331.

Although *Der Kampf des Prometheus* was completed, it was never staged, and neither was Hlatky's immense book drama *Weltenmorgen*. This is typically the fate of such ambitious projects, all too frequently undertaken by men of modest literary talent. Castle discusses Ehrenfels alongside the composer Adalbert von Goldschmidt, whose mythical oratorios *Die sieben Todessünden* (1876) and *Gaea* (1888) were successfully performed in Paris and Berlin, translated into French by Catulle Mendès, and praised by Bahr in *Studien zur Kritik der Moderne*.<sup>47</sup> The major difference between Goldschmidt and Ehrenfels is that, whereas the former was a competent lyric poet, Ehrenfels had no confidence in himself as a musician and so did not try to produce a *Gesamtkunstwerk* single-handed. As Nietzsche points out, the strength of Wagner's work lies in the interaction between music and drama as means of presenting a cosmic perspective: 'Seine Kunst führt ihn immer den doppelten Weg, aus einer Welt als Hörspiel in eine räthselhaft verwandte Welt als Schauspiel und umgekehrt.'<sup>48</sup> Ehrenfels overcompensates with an allusive sense of allegorical significance that makes his play difficult reading and almost impossible theatre. He tried to draw comfort from the fact that the final act of *Faust* was none the worse for being a libretto that never found a composer, but still appended a section headed 'Für den Musiker' to the text of his *Melusine* (1887) where he described the main musical motifs and their interaction.

Owing to the simple fact that few dramatists or musicians were as multi-talented as Wagner, many large-scale dramatic works written after the *Ring* were either in oratorio form or else subordinated the musical element to the spoken text. In the latter case they produced choral drama with a strong didactic element rather than opera or *Musiktheater* and tended to combine the role of the chorus in Greek tragedy with that of the choir in a sung mass. *Der Kampf des Prometheus* falls into this category, and the majority of Kralik's plays are intended for musical accompaniment of this kind. As Kralik was a tolerable musician, he often wrote the arrangements himself, or sometimes passed them onto his sister Mathilde, who had trained in musical composition at the Vienna Conservatory. The music in Kralik's works usually derives from the liturgical sources: hymns, settings of the *Agnus Dei* and *Ave Maria*,

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<sup>47</sup> *Deutsch-Österreichische Literaturgeschichte*, IV, 1594; Hermann Bahr, *Studien zur Kritik der Moderne* (Frankfurt a.M.: Literarische Anstalt (Rüiten & Loening), 1894), pp. 110–21.

<sup>48</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke*, ed. by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967–), IV/1, 39.

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warning or celebratory chants, prayers seeking blessing or forgiveness are placed at the end of scenes where they slow the pace of the action and emphasize the sacral atmosphere and moral teaching.

Both Ehrenfels and Kralik felt that the absence of a chorus in Wagner's work was a defect, since it gave the audience no authoritative perspective on the action, instead leaving them to make up their own minds. The chorus in *Der Kampf des Prometheus* speaks with a single voice and expresses what Ehrenfels hopes or expects will be the responses of the reader or spectator. After Maria's expulsion from the temple, the faith of the chorus is shaken and Ehrenfels is able to make the point that Prometheus, rather than being a single character, represents the individualistic principle which surges up when the spirit has no other support. It is noticeable that, whereas Wagner's music appeals to the emotions, Ehrenfels frequently uses the chorus to engage his spectators' intellect, asking them, for example, to judge the morality of Prometheus's attack on the prophet and his followers: 'Mord! — So nüttest du, Starker, die Kraft?'<sup>49</sup> Kralik, on the other hand, invariably depicts less of a clash of mythologies and therefore relies more on tapping the traditional piety of his audience.

Kralik and Ehrenfels were both passionately in favour of Wagner's festival ideology as a way of ensuring a select audience and an atmosphere which differed radically from that of everyday commercial theatre. They also shared enough of Wagner's megalomania to think that their own works merited such preferential treatment. Ehrenfels insisted in the notes to his *Allegorische Dramen* (1895) that *Der Kampf des Prometheus* deserved its own festival theatre, although one could also read this as an admission that it was unstageable by any conventional standards. Kralik too became intensely envious of Wagner as a man who had managed to build a temple to his own art and tried to persuade the Leo-Gesellschaft in the 1890s that the revival of Christian drama would be more meaningful if it were set apart from secular entertainments and had a permanent home of its own. But to no avail. Only after the First World War was the political climate in Austria favourable to such a venture, and by then Kralik's dramatic talent was put in the shade by Hofmannsthal.

The attraction of festival theatre lay, in the first instance, in its cultic overtones and in the idea, given wide currency by Wagner, that the sense of

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<sup>49</sup> Ehrenfels, 'Der Kampf des Prometheus', p. 343.

celebration would heighten the aesthetic experience and, under the right conditions, give the audience a lasting sense of community. Ehrenfels wanted to stage his tetralogy in a churchlike setting, hoping that this would stimulate a devotional frame of mind and make the spectator more sympathetic towards the Christian perspective. 'An Stelle des Altares die relativ schmale und hohe, thorförmige Bühnenöffnung, davor das gedeckte Orchester; hinter dem Zuschauerraum der erhöhte Chor mit der Orgel.'<sup>50</sup> Another fillip was that, not being part of the conventional theatre repertoire, festival plays often held a special place in the public's affections. Wagner's 'Bühnenweihfestspiel' *Parsifal* (1882), which he intended only to be performed at Bayreuth, was the object of widespread envy because he was able to avoid indiscriminate commercial exploitation and maintain the highest artistic standards. For many years this was one play that no one remembered from a third-rate provincial performance.

While Ehrenfels, like many of his generation, wrote syncretistic world theatre based on religious myth and had no obvious political objectives, Kralik wanted to exploit Wagner's conception of mass theatrical performances as potential foci of national consciousness for the purposes of religious renewal. Taking *Parsifal* together with the essay 'Religion und Kunst' (1880), one could argue that since the 1840s Wagner's vision of cultural regeneration had successively shifted its focus from politics to art, and from art to religion. Kralik noticed this pattern and may have been aware of following it himself, in his progression from socialism to myth, and from myth to cultic Catholicism. After he had seen *Parsifal* at Bayreuth in 1884, Kralik treated this rather than *Der Ring des Nibelungen* as the central Wagner text and was therefore able, in later years, to claim Wagner as a forerunner of the Catholic cultural revival:

Aber gerade das ist so romantisch, daß Wagner den Symbolismus der Eddagestalten, denen keine positive, zu bekennende Religion zugrunde liegt, sich auflösen läßt, in Nebel, in Flammen und Rauch, in eine Götterdämmerung. Er macht sozusagen mit dem ganzen altgermanischen Heidentum rücksichtslos reinen Tisch, um auf den reinen Tisch dann das positive, absolute, gläubig festzuhaltende Mysterium des heiligen Grals zu setzen. Ein

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<sup>50</sup> Ehrenfels, 'Der Kampf des Prometheus', p. 330.

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anderer, schlechterer Dichter hätte sicher aus dem Gralsymbol etwas Naturalistisches, Heidnisches gemacht.<sup>51</sup>

This is not to say that Kralik himself swept aside all things Germanic at any point, far from it. According to his autobiography he had progressed from aesthetic, cultural Catholicism to personal faith by the late 1880s; but this faith continued to be informed by the Catholic Greater German tradition, with its roots in the Romanticism of the early nineteenth century. Largely as a result of this he saw no contradiction between the two mythical codes, writing a couple of plays on purely Germanic themes for the German *Heimatkunst* movement and later producing for Catholic *Laienspieler* a series of festival plays with the title *Der heilige Gral*. It is striking that the Old Testament rarely features in Kralik's creative work, its place effectively being usurped by the medieval German sagas. Also, as the title *Das Donaugold des heiligen Severin* suggests, it is invariably against a German or an Austrian background that Kralik has Christian saints and emperors act out their lives.

Kralik's ideas on festival theatre began to take shape after a visit to Greece in the spring of 1880 and after he had attended a performance of the Oberammergau passion play on 23 May of that year. Lipiner had introduced Kralik to Nietzsche's writings in the late 1870s, when he was already well acquainted with Wagner's work; the Greek experience allowed him to clarify his interpretation of Dionysian theatre. For Kralik the basis of classical culture was 'Heimat, Patriotismus, Religion, Frömmigkeit, Gottesdienst, Glaube, Überlieferung',<sup>52</sup> in other words, it had everything Austrian liberal culture lacked. Like Calderón before him, Kralik saw Greek religion as pointing the way to true faith and Greek drama as leading up to Catholic drama. The Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* was part of that development, but the end of the road was Oberammergau, a priceless jewel in the nation's cultural crown, one valley untouched by the Enlightenment. 'Ich sah hier [in Oberammergau] das fortgesetzte Griechentum, das christliche Dionysostheater in heimischem Rahmen, in Wirklichkeit und Wirksamkeit, nicht tot, sondern ganz lebendig.'<sup>53</sup> As a *Laienspiel* the passion play was less than theatre, but as a cultic celebration involving audience and performers as concelebrants, it was much

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<sup>51</sup> Kralik, 'Die neue Romantik', *Der Gral*, 12 (1917–18), 311–19 (pp. 318–19); on the motif of the Holy Grail see Jost Hermand, 'Gralsmotive um die Jahrhundertwende', in Hermand, *Von Mainz nach Weimar 1793–1919: Studien zur deutschen Literatur* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1969), pp. 269–97.

<sup>52</sup> Kralik, *Die katholische Literaturbewegung der Gegenwart* (Ravensburg: Habel, 1909), p. 4.

<sup>53</sup> Kralik, *Tage und Werke*, p. 78.

more. In Oberammergau, Kralik found his ideal antithesis to modern drama and a model for his own dramatic endeavours:

Man denke sich, daß dies dramatische Mysterium, anstatt in dieser geschämigen Ländlichkeit von Engländern als Kuriosität besucht zu werden, den Mittelpunkt eines großstädtischen, weltstädtischen Gottesdienstes bilde, ausgestattet mit dem höchsten Zauber vollendeter Kunst, so hat man das Drama des Äschylus, das Drama des heiligen Dionysostheaters, so hat man die ein ganzes Volk hinreißende Begeisterung, die dies Leben des Lebens wert macht. Man vereinige das Prinzip von Oberammergau mit dem von Athen, das volle Christentum, den unbedingten Katholizismus mit dem hohen Kunstbewußtsein der griechischen Kultur, und man hat das Rechte, das Neue, das Moderne, das Zeitgemäße, das Zukunftsvolle.<sup>54</sup>

Even Kralik was, however, aware that commercialism had begun to sully his dream and that the reality was in need of purification. Given the obvious partiality of his view, it is salutary at this point to examine the discrepancy between dream and reality, by comparing his response to the Oberammergau experience with that of other late-nineteenth-century commentators and looking briefly at its history.<sup>55</sup>

Sentimentality aside, the Oberammergau passion play was and is a unique event. Only being performed once every ten years, it always arouses interest in a variety of quarters. The tradition goes back to 1633 when eighty-four villagers died of the plague and the survivors vowed, if they were spared, 'alle zehn Jahr die *passions-Tragedi* zu Ehren dess bitteren Leyden und Sterbens Jesu Christi zu halten und zu Exhibieren'.<sup>56</sup> There were no more fatalities and the grateful people kept their promise, publicly re-enacting what they believed to be the basis of their salvation. The tradition was not, however, an unbroken one arousing steady interest. During the Enlightenment the play met fierce opposition because the text was seen as coarse and vulgar, and as perpetuating an outdated superstition. An edict from the Archbishop of Salzburg indeed complained that performances did more to fill the ale-houses

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<sup>54</sup> Kralik, *Die katholische Literaturbewegung der Gegenwart*, p. 5.

<sup>55</sup> This account will draw on the following: Leopold Höhl, *Führer zum Ammergauer Passionsspiel im Jahre 1880*, Woerl's Reise-Handbücher (Würzburg: Woerl, 1880); L. [Leopold] Schönhoff, 'Zum Passionsspiel in Oberammergau', *Deutschland* (1889–90), pp. 583–85, 603–05; Heinrich Stümke, 'Das Oberammergauer Passionsspiel 1900', *Bühne und Welt*, 2 (1899–1900), 795–803; Klaus Lazarowicz, 'Das Oberammergauer Passionsspiel: Theater oder Gottesdienst?', in *Theatrum Europaeum: Festschrift für Elida Maria Szarota*, ed. by Richard Brinkmann et al. (Munich: Fink, 1982), pp. 517–36.

<sup>56</sup> Stümke, 'Das Oberammergauer Passionsspiel 1900', p. 795: italics in original.

than the churches.<sup>57</sup> By 1810 Oberammergau was the only surviving passion play in Bavaria and the villagers had to appeal to the King himself for permission to perform. This prompted Ottmar Weiss and Rochus Dedler to produce 'Jesus Messias oder der Menschen-Erlösung', a new text with less rough comedy and more poetry. First staged in 1815 to give thanks that Europe was once again at peace, it was divided into seventeen 'Vorstellungen'. In each of these the New Testament action was preceded by one or more symbolic tableaux from the Old Testament, with the chorus intervening to elucidate the connection between the two levels. This followed a tradition of biblical exegesis popular with the Romantics and meant that Christ's passion, although not exactly a re-enactment, followed a course that was anticipated by prophecy and analogy.

This was the turning-point in the fortunes of Oberammergau: the new text, which had certain similarities with Klopstock's *Messias*, was much praised; the play began to attract the attention of outsiders, and audiences grew steadily throughout the nineteenth century. Schönhoff says that twenty-four performances were scheduled for the summer of 1890, on Sundays alone, with extras on weekdays as required. When the Franco-Prussian war came to an end in 1871, the passion play was part of the celebrations. King Ludwig II of Bavaria attended in that year and was so impressed that he presented the villagers with a commemorative statue. The colossal neo-classical crucifixion group, with figures over four metres high, stands on the hill overlooking the village, an indication that the religious festival play had become a national institution.

Despite its unique position, the Oberammergau passion play has not been unaffected by literary fashion. As a piece of theatre with a loose episodic structure, it has a considerable overlap with historical drama. In the 1850s, Eduard Devrient took it as the model *Volksschauspiel*; and substantial modernizations carried out in 1890 reflect subsequent trends in historical drama. Kralik writes of the 1890 production:

Die Passionsspiele in Oberammergau wurden leider in diesem Spieljahr sehr modernisiert, die ursprüngliche Schlichtheit, der Zauber frommer Einfalt mußte glänzenden, reichen, theatralischen Dekorationen weichen. Das neuerbaute klassische Theater mit Maschinen und historischen Kostümen erinnerte an die Kunst der Meininger und an Baireuth.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Höhl, *Führer zum Ammergauer Passionsspiel im Jahre 1880*, p. 121.

<sup>58</sup> Kralik, *Die Weltliteratur der Gegenwart* (Graz: Verlag Styria, 1923), p. 70.

A new theatre with a covered auditorium was constructed between 1890 and 1900. It held four thousand and was clearly inspired by Bayreuth. The proscenium arch was supposedly wider than the entrance to Munich central station; the middle of the stage was occupied by a Corinthian temple which served as an inner stage and was used for the more intimate scenes; the archways at either side gave access into streets of Jerusalem; the house of Caiaphas stood at one side, that of Pilate at the other. The Duke of Saxe-Meiningen's company had become famous in the 1870s for the historical verisimilitude with which they staged historical plays, using period furniture and authentic-looking clothing wherever possible. Schönhoff, like Kralik, sees an attempt to follow this trend in the authentically long hair and beards of the male actors and in the carefully chosen costumes; he echoes Kralik's comment that the old style has been irrevocably lost as a result of looking for outside approval.

Schönhoff and Stümke, writing in 1890 and 1900 respectively, point out that by then Oberammergau already had a markedly international audience, many of whom were unable or unwilling to accept the Christian myth on anything but aesthetic terms. They agree on the strengths and weaknesses of the performance: the 'lebende Bilder' are effective, that being especially true of the last supper and the crucifixion, inspired by the painterly vision of Rubens and Rembrandt; the crowd scenes are also impressive, with as many as six hundred actors on stage for the entry into Jerusalem, which Stümke compares with the coronation procession in the Meiningen version of *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*. A reviewer of the 1922 passion play (the first staging after World War I) notes with some relief that Oberammergau has not tried to compete with Reinhardt: 'Beim Einzug in Jerusalem hätte Reinhardt die jubelnde Volksmenge einen Veitstanz aufführen lassen, hier schreitet der Zug vorüber, daß es einen bezwingt wie beim Anblick einer theophorischen Prozession.'<sup>59</sup> Schönhoff is aware that it is perhaps not fair to judge an amateur performance by professional standards but implies that, if Oberammergau tries to compete technically, then it must accept the inevitable comparisons. For that reason he repeatedly qualifies his praise of individual performers with the adverb 'verhältnismäßig' and agrees with Stümke that interest wanes during the over-long soliloquies.

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<sup>59</sup>—s, 'Die Oberammergauer Passion', *Hochland*, 19, ii (1921–22), 494–95 (p. 494).

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The fortunes of Oberammergau, its concessions to prevailing taste and trend towards professionalism show how far it diverges from Kralik's idealized image and point forward to the difficulties that he was to encounter in his collaborations with the Leo-Gesellschaft. It did, however, provide a model of Christian cultic drama which was in many senses more accessible than Wagner's work. Whereas Wagner's grandiose syntheses encouraged the creation of private cosmogonies which their authors rarely felt able or inclined to restrict to the limitations of the conventional stage, a dramatist of moderate talent was much more likely to produce a performable play if he took Oberammergau as a model; and thanks to its status as cultic drama, the decennial passion play had an unexpected affinity with the instinctual politics which, after the failure of Austrian liberalism, came to dominate the political scene. That this affinity was exploited to produce a Catholic cultural revival was largely due to the private convictions and individual endeavours of Richard von Kralik; that it was so much at odds with the cultural climate of the 1890s must be attributed to the very different way in which Hofmannsthal's generation had responded to the collapse of liberalism and to the inadequacies they perceived in the rationalist world-view.

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### CATHOLIC REVIVAL IN THE 1890S

*If I had time to run around and talk I would do it, for there is much politics agoing and it would be interesting if a body could get the hang of it. It is Christian and Jew by the horns — the advantage with the superior man, as usual — the superior man being the Jew every time and in all countries.<sup>1</sup>*

#### *The Leo-Gesellschaft*

Until the Christian Social party emerged in the late 1880s, it seemed that, in terms of political influence, Austrian Catholicism was a spent force, left behind by the rationalism underlying liberal thought, and out of touch with the individualist culture which accompanied it. Lueger breathed new life into it, seeing in Catholicism an anti-liberal ideology which had dynastic loyalty and anti-Semitism as its logical concomitants and could therefore combine easily with the same elements in his own campaigning strategy; furthermore, those sectors of the population to whom Lueger appealed, the lower middle classes and small taxpayers who had little to gain from either liberalism or socialism, had retained a substantial attachment to the Church.<sup>2</sup> So too had many Catholic aristocrats and intellectuals; sharing the little man's dislike of liberal and socialist ideologies, and often being deeply concerned about social issues and about the decline of Catholic representation in cultural life, they quickly joined forces with Lueger. Hence, not only were leading Catholic reformers such as Prince Alois von Liechtenstein instrumental in the formation of the

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Twain writing from Vienna, 23 October 1897, in *Selected Letters of Mark Twain*, ed. by Charles Neider (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), pp. 247–48.

<sup>2</sup> The following provide valuable information on the political and historical background: John W. Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement 1848–1897* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Peter Leisching, 'Die römisch-katholische Kirche in Cisleithanien', in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918: Im Auftrag der Kommission für die Geschichte der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie (1848–1918)*, ed. by Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch, 4 vols (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1973–85), IV: *Die Konfessionen*, 1–247; and Richard S. Geehr, *Karl Lueger: Mayor of Fin de Siècle Vienna* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990).

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Christian Social party, but the sharper, more aggressive tone, which Schorske sees as characterizing Lueger's 'politics in a new key', was accompanied by the emergence of a more assertive form of cultural Catholicism, centred on the Leo-Gesellschaft and promoted enthusiastically by Richard von Kralik.<sup>3</sup>

The Leo-Gesellschaft was founded in 1891 as an 'Österreichischer Verein zur Förderung von Wissenschaft und Kunst auf christlicher Grundlage'. It took its name from Pope Leo XIII (1878–1903) who, unlike his reactionary predecessor Pius IX, accepted that the secular state was there to stay and encouraged Catholics to involve themselves more vigorously in public life. At the height of Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* German Catholics had set a precedent with the foundation of the influential Görres-Gesellschaft (1876). Their Austrian neighbours tacitly followed this model, but at a distance indicative of their less beleaguered situation.

The idea of establishing 'einen näheren Verband aller auf christlichem Boden stehenden Gelehrten Österreichs' was first mooted at the second 'allgemeiner österreichischer Katholikentag', which was held in Vienna in 1889 and, significantly, addressed by Lueger.<sup>4</sup> Delegates were aware that the intellectual climate was dominated by materialism, Darwinism and positivist science; furthermore, the conviction of many academics that the Christian world-view was incompatible with scientific or intellectual progress had filtered down from the universities into the schools, into literature and the press, and thence to broad sections of the middle classes. The assembly believed, however, that this situation was reversible, if the atomization of Catholic forces could be overcome. The Leo-Gesellschaft was not therefore a product of political pressure but of a renewed confidence, fostered by Catholic involvement in the rising Christian Social party. Viewed thus, it can be associated with a number of organizations representing Catholic interests that were founded in the 1890s, and especially with the newspaper, *Die Reichspost* (1894), a product of the third 'Katholikentag' (1892). As the journalistic organ of the Christian Social party, this offered an alternative to the broadly liberal and Jewish-owned press and to the Social Democratic *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (1889). It also complemented the traditional, conservative bias of *Das Vaterland*. The

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<sup>3</sup> Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, pp. 133–46.

<sup>4</sup> Franz Martin Schindler, *Die Leo-Gesellschaft 1891–1901* (Vienna: Leo-Gesellschaft, 1902), p. 5. The following were also consulted: Schindler, *Die Leo-Gesellschaft im Jahre 1902* (Vienna: Leo-Gesellschaft, 1903); Schindler, *Die Leo-Gesellschaft im Jahre 1903* (Vienna: Leo-Gesellschaft, 1904).

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*Reichspost* became a daily in 1907, significantly absorbing the *Vaterland* at the time when the Christian Social party merged with the conservatives.

The statutes of the Leo-Gesellschaft received official approval on 9 June 1891; its founder-president was Joseph Alexander Freiherr von Helfert, a conservative member of the Herrenhaus, and the constituent assembly was held in Vienna on 28 January 1892 and attended by 400 people. At its inception the society had 832 members, and numbers swelled by an average of 250 per year throughout the first decade; by the end of 1901 the total had reached 2661 and the society gained a further thousand members over the next three years. Membership lists show that the Leo-Gesellschaft found support in the highest strata of Viennese society. In 1901 it boasted seventeen members of the Imperial family, including Emperor Franz Joseph himself; it had the support of Cardinal Gruscha, Archbishop of Vienna, and drew heavily on the Catholic clergy, on seminarists and theology students; however, most members came from the educated upper middle classes, amongst them many Catholic academics and artists. The society's considerable resources, derived from subscriptions and donations, were used to produce a number of publications, including regular newsletters for members and a yearbook; and it organized countless seminars, conferences and speaker-meetings.

Although the Leo-Gesellschaft was not as such a political organization and was only allowed to exist on the condition that it took no direct part in politics, there was a distinct overlap between cultural programme and political agenda, not least because many of the most prominent members were committed to political Catholicism: most importantly, Franz Martin Schindler, Professor of Moral Theology at the University of Vienna and General Secretary from 1891 to 1917, was co-author of the manifesto on which the Christian Social party fought the 1891 elections. This was his view of the society's objectives and of the atmosphere against which it had to assert itself:

War es vordem, in der Zeit der allgemeinen Herrschaft der christlichen Weltanschauung, als das unbestrittene Endziel aller Geistesarbeit anerkannt, daß sie zuhächst der Verherrlichung Gottes im Einklang mit seiner Offenbarung und Kirche dienen müsse, so hatte das 18. Jahrhundert andere Ideale in den Vordergrund gestellt, und das ganze 19. Jahrhundert sah das geistige Leben der Völker immer ausschließlicher in den Dienst des Irdischen und Materiellen eingezwängt. In wachsendem Maße, wenn auch nicht überall gleichmäßig und ununterbrochen, traten Entfremdung, Spannung und häufig genug offene Gegnerschaft an die Stelle der früheren Einheit und der harmonischen Verbindung zwischen Religion und

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Wissenschaft, zwischen christlicher Lebensführung und der sogenannten schönen Litteratur, zwischen Kirche und Kunst.<sup>5</sup>

The emphasis on restoring a lost harmony between learning and faith reveals the influence of Schindler's mentor, Karl von Vogelsang (1818–90). As editor of the conservative newspaper *Das Vaterland* he had argued that the erosion of faith, and the social problems caused by capitalism and industrialization could best be remedied by turning back the clocks on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and re-establishing the state on a corporate, almost neo-feudal basis. This nostalgia for the pre-industrial *Gottesstaat* suggests that Kralik's Romanticism will not be out of place here.

Like the Görres-Gesellschaft, the Austrian organization was divided into a number of sections. Six were planned but, significantly, the 'Section für Naturwissenschaften' did not become active until 1903. (Its first public venture was a repetition of Foucault's pendulum experiment in the Vienna Rotunde.) Alongside history, philosophy and theology, the social sciences, and law (the last two sections were later amalgamated), one was devoted to 'Sprache und Litteratur'. Repeated restructuring and renaming of this section reflects the society's increasing commitment to the promulgation of Christian literature and, above all, drama. Schindler's account of the first ten years, published in 1902, shows that the section initially devoted its energies to promoting research into Austrian dialects and to republishing the seventeenth-century religious poetry of Simon Rettenbacher, and planned only 'prüfende Beobachtung der gegenwärtigen litterarischen besonders der dramatischen Production'.<sup>6</sup> In other words, the Leo-Gesellschaft wished to remain aloof from literature, which had displayed strong anti-clerical tendencies since the campaign against the Concordat (1855), and from drama, where Anzengruber had become the bogey-man of the Catholic establishment, daring to use the stage as a pulpit and to preach his liberal message in a linguistic and a dramatic idiom that was accessible even to the less educated classes.<sup>7</sup> From a Catholic perspective, the 1890s gave further grounds for unease: naturalism seemed to dominate the stage with scenes of decadence, depravity, and degeneration; eroticism, adultery, philandering, and immorality could all be considered far too prevalent,

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<sup>5</sup> Schindler, *Die Leo-Gesellschaft 1891–1901*, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Horwath, *Der Kampf gegen die religiöse Tradition: Die Kulturkampfliteratur Österreichs 1780–1918* (Berne: Lang, 1978), pp. 191–248; Karlheinz Roszbacher, *Literatur und Liberalismus: Zur Kultur der Ringstraßenzeit in Wien* (Vienna: J & V, 1992), pp. 188–213.

and writers such as Schnitzler had the audacity to claim that this was the authentic Viennese atmosphere; Hauptmann and Halbe openly attacked the Catholic Church, and Ibsen's emphasis on psychology left little room for the notion of Man as a harmonious being, at one with himself and his God. Given this situation, it is hardly surprising that, in many Catholics, disapproval had crystallized as a complete rejection of the stage, a conviction that drama had ceased to be compatible with Christian ethics.<sup>8</sup>

*'Weihnachtsspiel' and 'Osterfestspiel'*

To overcome this prejudice against the theatre, vision and determination were required, as well as a measure of dramatic talent; and conversely, for that vision to become theatrical performance, it needed the resources of a large organization. These elements came together in May 1893 when the artist Wenzel Ottokar Noltsch, a prominent member of the Leo-Gesellschaft, invited the directorate to the house of his friend Kralik to hear their host read his own composition, *Das Mysterium von der Geburt des Heilandes: Ein Weihnachtsspiel nach volkstümlichen Überlieferungen*. The directorate was impressed and, encouraged by a Jesuit member, Bernhard Duhr, took its first step towards actively promoting an alternative Christian form of drama when it agreed that the society should publish Kralik's play and sponsor a production of it at Christmas 1893.

*Das Mysterium von der Geburt des Heilandes* appears to the modern reader as a relatively conventional example of the genre, telling the story of Christ's birth and early life in a series of epic scenes that are interspersed with renditions of well-known Christmas carols. Written in rhymed verse and closely following the gospel narrative, Kralik's work maintains a dignified and reverential tone throughout, a factor which no doubt helped to win the approval of the Leo-Gesellschaft. This restraint contrasts markedly with the colourful dialect and often irreverent humour to be found in those nativity plays which were part of the folk revival of the 1920s. In Kralik's play, however, neither the innkeeper nor the shepherds are allowed to undermine the atmosphere of

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<sup>8</sup> For a Catholic view typical of this period, see Anton Stára, *Die Dramaturgie dargestellt nach katholischen Grundsätzen* (Vienna: Verlag 'Austria', 1893).

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high seriousness, in which the only folk element is the inclusion of favourite carols, such as 'Stille Nacht' and 'O du selige, o du fröhliche'.

The most striking literary influence on Kralik's nativity play is Goethe's *Faust* which provides the model for its two-part structure, consisting of a *Weihnachtsspiel*, introduced by a 'Prolog' and a 'Vorspiel im Himmel', and a *Dreikönigsspiel*, prefaced by a 'Zwischenspiel in der Hölle'. While the 'Prolog' simply establishes the sacral atmosphere of the play and urges the audience to pay attention as they would in church, Kralik uses the 'Vorspiel im Himmel' to place the Christmas story within the larger framework of God sending his Son to earth in order to redeem the sins of mankind. Following its Goethean model, the scene opens with a chorus of angels singing God's praise but then continues with a discussion of the way in which evil has taken hold of the earth and God's commandments are no longer being obeyed. While the Son begs his Father to take pity, the Devil, a pale imitation of Mephistopheles, argues that Man's redemption would be an injustice: every individual who has sinned deserves to be damned; but, just as Mephistopheles cannot ultimately win his wager, so the Devil's view never looks likely to prevail in Kralik's *Weihnachtsspiel*, and he plays no part in the subsequent action. The 'Zwischenspiel in der Hölle' is a little more innovative: there a motley collection of devils bemoan the fact that it is now pointless to incite men to disobey God's laws since the newborn Christ will redeem them. Their only hope is to kill the child. This scene provides a metaphysical explanation for the Massacre of the Innocents; but there is no need for the devils to play any part in the subsequent action, since Herod's reasoning is clear enough without their intervention: 'Sollt ein neuer Judenkönig kommen, / So würde mir das Reich genommen.'<sup>9</sup> The metatheatrical framework of Kralik's nativity play therefore adds a little to its intellectual content but has virtually no impact in theatrical terms.

Kralik's *Weihnachtsspiel* was staged at the Großer Musikvereinssaal, home of Vienna's Philharmonic Orchestra, on 27, 29 and 30 December 1893 and, despite the distrust of the professional theatre formerly evinced by the Leo-Gesellschaft, was anything but an amateur or a shoddy production. The society decided that a couple of big names and a good standard of acting would both guarantee an audience and improve press coverage; costumes were hired and

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<sup>9</sup> Kralik, *Das Mysterium von der Geburt des Heilandes: Ein Weihnachtsspiel nach volkstümlichen Überlieferungen* (Vienna: Leo-Gesellschaft, 1894), p. 121.

Noltsch supervised the construction of a stage-set. Alfred von Berger was persuaded to direct; later in charge at the Burgtheater (1910–12), he was in 1893 acting as an artistic adviser there, and also giving popular lectures on philosophy and aesthetics at the University of Vienna. The parts were played by a combination of amateurs and professional actors: Kralik's wife Maia played the Virgin Mary, opposite the Burgtheater actor Jakob Schreiner as Joseph; Berger's wife, Stella Hohenfels, who was one of the stars of the Burgtheater, played the archangel Gabriel and delivered the prologue. Children from a state orphanage joined with the Wiener Singakademie to provide the chorus.

The *Weihnachtsspiel* enjoyed considerable success, being played before large and supposedly rapt audiences which included many Viennese notables. Most major newspapers reviewed it, and there seems to have been universal approval of the artistic achievement. The reviews do, however, fall into two categories insofar as the liberal press tended to concentrate on cultural and theatrical issues, while their Catholic colleagues also emphasized the play's ideological purpose. Most liberal papers saw the *Weihnachtsspiel* as a Berger-Hohenfels production, its success deriving from Berger's directorial flair and his wife's mesmeric appeal. It certainly benefited from the star-cult of the Burgtheater, and Stella Hohenfels, who had played both Euphion and the archangel Michael in Wilbrandt's ground-breaking production of *Faust* (1883–84), was eminently suited to play Gabriel here. Her most memorable roles were those to which she could impart an ethereal quality, a sense of existing in two worlds: she was the first Hannele in *Hanneles Himmelfahrt* (1894) and played the heroine of Maeterlinck's *Monna Vanna* to great effect in 1903. In a sketch on the cover of the *Welt-Neuigkeits-Blatt* Gabriel is depicted as an almost Pre-Raphaelite figure with masses of loose blonde hair; dressed in a long, flowing robe, she carries a long-stemmed lily in place of a sword.<sup>10</sup> Berger appears to have made the most both of his wife's strengths and of the opportunity to create striking tableaux. The 'Vorspiel im Himmel' followed in the best Goethean tradition, and commentators noted that a painterly inspiration was put to good use for the adoration of the shepherds.

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<sup>10</sup> *Welt-Neuigkeits-Blatt, Illustrierte Beilage zum Fremden-Blatt*, 6 January 1895, p. 1. Most newspaper reviews were found in Kralik's collection of press-cuttings, held in the Druckschriften-sammlung of the Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek. It has therefore occasionally not been possible to give full references; but as much information as was available is given in the relevant footnotes and articles known to be unsigned or untitled will be identified as such.

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Reviews in liberal newspapers were characterized by a surprisingly widespread failure to identify any ideological or political sub-text: Kralik's *Weihnachtsspiel* was, for example, no more than 'ein Akt besonnener Rückschau', an aesthetic experiment that resurrected 'eine uralte und uns doch fremde Kunstgattung'.<sup>11</sup> One explanation for this might be that the liberal press was dazzled by the charismatic performances and consequently somewhat naive in its perception of Catholic cultural aspirations. Another possibility is that commentators made a conscious decision to ignore the sub-texts, either because such prominent figures from the theatre world were involved, or because they felt that theatrical quality should take precedence over any ideological objections. Like Hofmannsthal's festival plays, the *Weihnachtsspiel* was greeted with a certain amount of naive admiration but also faced more discerning critics with a moral dilemma.

The Catholic press was no less complimentary towards Berger and Hohenfels but at the same time pressed home the ideological message, proclaiming that the *Weihnachtsspiel* was the first victory in the Leo-Gesellschaft's campaign to reform the theatre. The *Reichspost* correspondent, for example, gloated in the very first edition of the paper that Kralik's mystery play was 'so wahr, daß selbst unsere liberalen Reporter, die Lobhudler der modernen Sittenlosigkeit der Bühne, nicht umhin konnten, dem unter dem Patronate der Leo-Gesellschaft aber- und abermals zur Darstellung gebrachten Weihnachtsspiele eine gezwungene Huldigung darzubringen'.<sup>12</sup> However genuine this homage may have been in the early 1890s, it did not last; as soon as professional actors ceased to be involved, the liberal and left-wing press woke up to the tendentiousness of such productions and began to take objection. It is indeed noticeable that their reviews soon became shorter and less favourable, with several papers ultimately adopting the policy of ignoring Kralik's dramatic activities and those of the Catholic community in general.

Both in the *Reichspost* review and in other Catholic responses to the *Weihnachtsspiel* there is an anti-Semitic undertone to criticisms of the professional stage; but, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the writers are far more strident in attacking its immorality and see the decorum of Kralik's nativity play as a substantial part of its appeal for the Catholic spectator. The *Vaterland*, for example, reports that Adam Trabert, a Catholic writer and a

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<sup>11</sup> Gustav Schönaich, 'Ein Weihnachtsspiel', *Wiener Tagblatt*, 28 December 1893, pp. 1–3 (p. 2); anon., 'Ein Weihnachtsspiel in Wien', *Welt-Neuigkeits-Blatt*, 30 December 1893, p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> Anon., 'Kraliks Mysterium', *Reichspost*, 1 January 1894, p. 5.

prominent member of the Leo-Gesellschaft, had publicized the forthcoming production by making the following assertion:

das Theater sollte eine Pflege-Anstalt zur Volksbildung, eine Pflege-Anstalt zur sittlichen Erziehung sein. Bei dem Theater von heute sind Gott und Himmel verschwunden [...]. Der Teufel hingegen ist im Ehebruchs-drama der Dichter selbst. Die Unsittlichkeit und Laster, sie feiern auf unserer Bühne ihre Triumphe. Es muß daher eine unserer ersten Aufgabe [*sic*] sein, den Kampf gegen diese Stätte zu führen.<sup>13</sup>

That this was a heartfelt concern was made clear two years later when a Catholic magazine for girls urged the professional theatre to take up works such as the *Weihnachtsspiel*, saying: 'Dann könnten doch gewissenhafte Eltern wieder einmal ohne Bangen ihre Töchter ins Theater gehen lassen.'<sup>14</sup>

Kralik's *Weihnachtsspiel* did not find a place in the professional repertoire but protective parents were to have their wish, insofar as the Leo-Gesellschaft production became a regular feature in Vienna's cultural calendar. The version staged in 1893 was, however, only the first half of Kralik's two-part text and ended somewhat abruptly after the adoration of the shepherds. The *Dreikönigsspiel*, which continues with the arrival of the Magi at Herod's court and then in Bethlehem, the Massacre of the Innocents, the flight to Egypt and safe return of the Holy Family, was omitted entirely. When the production was repeated in January 1895 and again in December of that year, the three most important scenes — the Magi before Herod, the adoration, and the return from Egypt — were appended to the *Weihnachtsspiel*. The musical element also grew in prominence, so that the December performance was little short of an oratorio. The following Christmas (1896), the Leo-Gesellschaft opted instead for a full-blown oratorio, Franz Liszt's *Christus*. The next year then saw the entire *Dreikönigsspiel* staged with an amateur cast on 4 and 5 January 1898.<sup>15</sup>

The *Vaterland* informed its readers on 9 January 1894 that Dr Belopotoczky, Chaplain General to the armed forces and vice-president of the Leo-Gesellschaft, had recently hosted a dinner to celebrate the success of the *Weihnachtsspiel*. Schindler, Berger, Hohenfels, Schreiner, Noltsch and Kralik all attended. At approximately the same time the name of the section was changed from

<sup>13</sup> Anon., 'Vortragsabend des katholischen Schulvereines', *Vaterland*, 21 November 1893, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Anon., untitled review, *Apostolat der christlichen Tochter*, 1 (1 January 1896), p. 13.

<sup>15</sup> According to Kralik and to the *Reichspost* (1 January 1894), the *Weihnachtsspiel* made a profit of 1000 Gulden in the first year; in 1895 it made a loss because of the cost of hiring a larger orchestra; and it broke even in 1898, even though 1000 Gulden were spent on costumes (these had previously been hired).

'Section für Sprache und Litteratur' to 'Section für Litteratur und Kunst'. This initial acceptance emboldened Kralik to propose a more ambitious theatrical venture in 1894: that the Leo-Gesellschaft should stage the three-part Easter passion play that he had written almost ten years earlier, *Das Mysterium vom Leben und Leiden des Heilandes: Ein Osterfestspiel in drei Tagewerken* ('Die frohe Botschaft', 'Die Passion', 'Die Auferstehung'). However, they shied away from such a massive undertaking, and five years later, in 1899, the ecclesiastical authorities refused permission for a Christian workers' association to stage Kralik's *Osterfestspiel* 'aus Furcht vor etwaiger Profanierung durch unzulängliche Darstellung'.<sup>16</sup> No doubt these rejections were in part due to the sheer size of the work and to its specific weaknesses (the play has, to my knowledge, never been staged in more than fragmentary form); but a brief examination of the text also offers an insight into what Catholic intellectuals expected at that time, as well as revealing some of the recurrent problems of the mystery play as a dramatic form.

It is evident from Catholic responses to Kralik's *Weihnachtsspiel* that the Leo-Gesellschaft and its audiences demanded a sacral atmosphere, a dignified tone, and faithfulness to the biblical narrative. The *Osterfestspiel* fulfils the first requirement insofar as it too is choral drama: hymns and musical items derived from liturgical sources are incorporated into a series of epic scenes which tell the story of Christ's ministry on earth, His passion and resurrection. A consistently dignified tone is, however, difficult to sustain over three evenings of performance and not entirely desirable either — the butler's mock-sermon on the ills of marrying too young is, for example, a welcome introduction to the marriage at Cana, and the same scene gains in colour when an archangel and a small devil argue and briefly scuffle over the value of marriage. The Catholic dramatist inevitably walks a tightrope between boredom and blasphemy, with the added risk that, especially in such scenes as the beheading of John the Baptist, dignity may be bought at the price of dramatic intensity. Taking the third expectation of faithfulness to the biblical narrative, any play pieced together from the four gospels will inevitably involve selection and re-arrangement, especially with regard to the minor events. Furthermore, the Easter story in particular, dealing with conflict and betrayal, demands that the dramatist set out the events leading up to the crucifixion in a coherent and convincing manner. The convention in such a situation is that

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<sup>16</sup> Kralik, *Tage und Werke*, p. 150.

the dramatist should not allow his personality and prejudices to intervene, that he should strive to be an anonymous *Redakteur*. On this front Kralik fails: his Judas Iscariot betrays Jesus out of a sense of offended morality, because he suspects him of illicit relations with Mary Magdalene; and her frivolity and love of pleasure are, in turn, held directly responsible for the death of her brother, Lazarus. Rather than deepening our understanding, such additions merely impart a prurient undercurrent to the drama.

The efficacy of the mystery play framework, which makes the New Testament action into a play within a play, must also be questioned. In the *Osterfestspiel* as in the *Weihnachtsspiel* this is intended to emphasize that the play is concerned with sacred rather than secular history, that cosmic forces are necessarily involved. The *Osterfestspiel* opens with a pious prologue, after which Lucifer, Satan and Belial clamber onto the stage from a subterranean hell and proceed to plot the downfall of 'Johannes, der üble Mann, / Und Jesus, der Zauberer'.<sup>17</sup> This scene is immediately followed by Christ's temptation in the wilderness, neatly establishing the principle that here, as in the gospels, angels and devils are directly involved in the action. The mystery play approach can, however, become unsatisfactory if the metaphysical framework becomes either theologically abstruse or so prominent that it distracts attention from the play proper. This, unfortunately, happens in the third part of the *Osterfestspiel*, 'Die Auferstehung', where, before the risen Christ returns to earth, he descends, scarlet pennant in hand, to the 'Vorhölle', in order to liberate the souls of numerous Old Testament prophets who have been kept in limbo there, and in order to claim his victory over the forces of evil by casting Lucifer in chains. This lengthy scene, which has its origins, at best, in an obscure scholasticism, pre-emptes the drama of the empty tomb, thereby reducing the tension and emotional impact of the traditional resurrection scenes.

Kralik's attempt to integrate the devil figures of the framework into the human action is rather more successful in dramatic terms but potentially frustrating for a modern audience — and here one glimpses one of the major dilemmas of modern Catholic drama — because it hovers uneasily between modern individuated psychology on the one hand and religious timelessness on the other. At several points in the *Osterfestspiel*, the devils appear in disguise amongst the biblical figures and manipulate the weaker, usually female

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<sup>17</sup> Kralik, *Das Mysterium vom Leben und Leiden des Heilands: Ein Osterfestspiel in drei Tagewerken: Nach volkstümlichen Überlieferungen: Mit musikalischem Anhang*, 3 vols (Vienna: Konegen, 1895), I, 14–15.

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characters by fanning their jealousies and anxieties. For example, in the scenes at Herod's court Satan, dressed as an old woman, confirms Herodias's fear that, if John the Baptist gains the King's confidence, then she and her daughter Salome will lose their home. Herod's inner turmoil and the anxieties of his concubine have considerable potential as psychological drama and are certainly sufficient motivation for Herodias to want John's death, but the presence of Satan avoids the necessity to deepen the psychology of the biblical characters, to make them into complex human beings, caught in difficult human situations.

This may seem to be a missed opportunity, but Hermann Sudermann's *Johannes* (1898), based on the same biblical material, reveals the extent to which the modern psychological approach dilutes the religious message. The doubts of the central figure prevent him from functioning confidently as the prophet of the Lord, instead making him a bewildered agent of inscrutable forces. Hermann Bahr wrote of a 1902 production:

Denn ist nicht jeder von uns ein Johannes? Wir dienen mit unserem Wirken und Tun einem unerforschlichen und tiefen Sinn, den wir nicht wissen können. [...] Wir denken unseren Willen zu tun und folgen doch nur Geboten eines Unbekannten. [...] Wir werden dahin geführt, an unseren eigenen Ernst nicht mehr zu glauben, sondern wir spüren, daß der große Ernst des Lebens hinter dem Spiel ist, das mit uns getrieben wird; aber den können wir niemals erfahren, wir bleiben im leeren Scheine.<sup>18</sup>

Clearly, this private confusion is not a good evangelistic tool, since it effectively removes God from the picture; but the only alternative, a frustrating prospect for most modern writers and spectators, is to restrict oneself to the familiar truths of biblical history.

In the late nineteenth century, one solution to the problems of the play-within-a-play structure as a vehicle for religious drama had been found. That was the approach of the Oberammergau passion play, where each scene from the New Testament was preceded by one or more tableaux from the Old Testament. Taking place in southern Bavaria, the Oberammergau event was for Austrian Catholics both familiar and relatively accessible. Perhaps because it feared unfavourable comparisons the Leo-Gesellschaft staged neither Kralik's nor any other passion play, instead waiting until an indisputably classic example of Catholic drama presented itself.

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<sup>18</sup> Hermann Bahr, *Rezensionen: Wiener Theater 1901 bis 1903* (Berlin: Fischer, 1903), pp. 464–73 (pp. 472–73).

*Calderón at the City Hall*

The work chosen by the Leo-Gesellschaft for its next and most ambitious theatrical venture was Calderón's Corpus Christi play *Das große Welttheater* (*El gran teatro del mundo*), which was staged in the arcaded courtyard of Vienna City Hall on 12 and 13 July 1897 and indoors on 30 October, in order to raise money for a number of deserving causes. One factor that probably made the society more favourable to this than to anything Kralik could produce was that Calderón had high literary standing. His works had been praised by Goethe; A.W. Schlegel had put him on a par with Shakespeare and called him the last great poet of Catholicism; and this particular text had been translated by no less than Eichendorff. In the course of the nineteenth century a number of respected academics had devoted studies to Calderón, and he had been a rallying cry for Catholics during the *Kulturkampf*.<sup>19</sup>

Widely regarded as the paradigmatic exposition of the *theatrum mundi* topos, and indeed of the Catholic Baroque world-view as a whole, Calderón's one-act drama *El gran teatro del mundo* was published in Spain in 1655. An *auto sacramental*, it is one of over seventy allegorical dramas which Calderón wrote to be staged at the feast of Corpus Christi. The defining characteristic of an *auto* is that it is performed in honour of the Eucharist and, like that sacrament, aims to nourish the spiritual life of faith. *El gran teatro del mundo* is famous for the fullness and poetic clarity with which the meaning of the *theatrum mundi* topos unfolds. However, Calderón's aim was not merely to demonstrate the aptness of the analogy between the world and a theatre but to reveal the moral lessons which could be derived from it. God, having created the world as a stage, produces and directs the play of life; man therefore becomes an actor playing a divinely ordained role; his possessions are merely props and costumes, not his, but loaned for the duration of the performance. If he is to live his life aright, he must play whatever role he is given in accordance with Christian moral teaching and remember that, once the play is over, God will grant eternal life or condemn to eternal perdition, depending on how well he has acquitted himself.

In Calderón's play human society is represented by six figures: King, Rich Man, Peasant, Beggar, Beauty and Wisdom. For theological reasons an unborn

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<sup>19</sup> Henry W. Sullivan, *Calderón in the German Lands and in the Low Countries: His Reception and Influence, 1654–1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 322–30.

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child also features briefly at the beginning and end. While the first four can be classified as social ranks, Wisdom, personified in the figure of a nun, is an allegory of the Roman Catholic Church, and Beauty is depicted as 'woman', leading men astray when she should be leading them to God. Calderón's main concern is not, however, the salvation of the individual, but his position within the fixed hierarchy of the Catholic State. The thrust of the *auto* is socio-political, with Spanish absolutism being put forward as the best means of creating God's kingdom on earth.

The action of *El gran teatro del mundo* falls into three sections. First, God (Der Meister) summons the World (Frau Welt) and demands that she entertain him by staging a play; she duly brings on props and costumes, after which the Master allocates parts to those who are to perform. The opening exchanges allow for a sermon-like exposition of the *theatrum mundi* topos: the world was created to be the stage for Man's endeavours and provides all the resources needed for each individual to acquit him- or herself honourably. What matters is not the size of the role but how one interprets it. The interaction between the six figures is then presented in the central section as a play-within-a-play, with the Law of Grace acting as prompter and periodically reminding the actors of the play's motto: 'Tue recht — Gott über euch'.<sup>20</sup>

Each character reveals his or her attitude to his or her role in an introductory speech: the King, glorying in his apparently unlimited power, makes no mention of duty or service; Beauty shows a sensual delight in the world around her but, in contrast to Wisdom, fails to see its splendours as a reflection of God's glory; the Rich Man is likewise unable to see the purpose of his gifts, selfishly assuming that money and the pleasures it buys are an end in themselves; the Beggar, although painfully aware of the harshness of his lot, accepts it and prays for the strength to bear it. The Beggar's humility contrasts with the truculence of the Peasant who has little sense of working for the good of society and is engrossed in schemes intended to increase his own gain.

Following these introductions, the way in which each character responds to the Beggar's plea for alms reveals how they view their role in relation to others. The King, too grand to be troubled with such trivia as almsgiving, delegates responsibility to his chancellor; the Rich Man, obsessed with his own wealth and pleasure, flatly refuses; the self-sufficient Peasant advises the

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<sup>20</sup> Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff, *Neue Gesamtausgabe der Werke und Schriften*, ed. by Gerhart Baumann and Siegfried Grosse, 4 vols (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1957–58), III, 332.

Beggar to get a job; and Beauty is so vain that she hardly notices him; only Wisdom, the nun, immediately shares her bread with the Beggar. This action rounds off the second section of Calderón's play, and the third begins as the actors are commanded one by one to leave the stage via the exit marked by a coffin; they do so, after confessing their failings, and God judges their performances. The play ends, as is conventional in an *auto sacramental*, with the celebration of the Eucharist. Only the Beggar and Wisdom are immediately admitted; the Rich Man, who responded to the approach of death by adopting the Horatian motto of *carpe diem*, is irrevocably damned; the rest are despatched to purgatory where they await divine grace.

Given that Calderón's play presents a view of society and of individual destiny which is typical of Counter-Reformation Catholicism, it is important to consider the socio-political implications of *El gran teatro del mundo* for the 1890s. Firstly, the hierarchical structure of the medieval *Gottesstaat* is not only at odds with the liberal ethos of social mobility but also goes against the demand for social justice by promising that suffering will be rewarded in the afterlife. Above all, the Beggar raises the question of poverty: is it a necessary evil? He is an essential part of Calderón's hierarchy because he allows the other figures to fulfil their Christian duty by exercising charity. He fulfils his own role if he has the humility to beg and accept what little he is given without complaint. However, by the 1890s the spiritualization of poverty had begun to wear a little thin, and there was considerable debate in Catholic circles as to how the plight of the urban poor might best be tackled. The message of Calderón's text, that poverty is inevitable but can and should be alleviated by almsgiving, is closest to the policy of 'Sozialreform', a product of the Romantic feudalism associated with Karl von Vogelsang. The play thereby masks the fact that many Catholic intellectuals, including Lueger and other prominent members of the Christian Social party, espoused the more progressive policy of 'Sozialpolitik' which advocated reform within the existing social framework.<sup>21</sup>

It is also tempting to venture a modern-day interpretation of the Rich Man, especially as the tradition of capitalist villany represented by that figure has been updated by every generation since the New Testament. As a representative of the affluent middle class, which was widely felt to be infected with the

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<sup>21</sup> For a discussion of these policies see Diamant, *Austrian Catholics and the First Republic*, pp. 14-25; on Vogelsang also Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna*, pp. 174-77.

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Jewish money-making spirit and the decadence which that engendered, he alone is excluded from grace, almost an alien presence in the Catholic State. This fits in with both the alliance of peasants and aristocracy which Broch saw as Austria's 'Gallert-Demokratie',<sup>22</sup> and with the absence of the middle classes from the vision of *völkisch* renewal which was central to Langbehn's bestselling *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (1890). A further partnership foregrounded in Calderón's play is that between the Church and the State: that God ultimately reduces the King's stint in purgatory because he came to the aid of Wisdom when she stumbled may have been seen in 1897 as a reminder of the much-reviled Concordat of 1855 and of the continuing co-operation between State and Church.

In his autobiography Kralik claims the credit for proposing *Das große Welttheater*, explaining, 'Ich wollte so auch zeigen, daß Calderons allegorische Darstellungen nicht weniger kühn seien als das Auftreten der göttlichen Personen in den Mysterien. Sodann wollte ich durch Calderons Autorität meinen philosophischen Spielbegriff exemplifizieren'.<sup>23</sup> Having demonstrated in the *Weihnachtsspiel* that biblical figures could be represented on stage in a dignified manner, Kralik wanted to win support for the allegorical mode of drama which he personally favoured and was to pastiche many times. The arrogance of using Calderón to publicize his 'Spielbegriff' supports the claim, made by the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, that an examination of the leading personalities in the Leo-Gesellschaft would reveal that, whilst some were inspired by the desire to increase the influence of the Church, others had in mind 'ganz andere als innerlich-religiöse Zwecke (zum Beispiel das Streben nach ästhetischer Bethätigung)'.<sup>24</sup> No names were mentioned, but this certainly applied to Kralik.

With *Das große Welttheater*, as in the previous theatrical ventures, the approach of the Leo-Gesellschaft was very thorough, although not this time up to professional standards. It was an extremely large-scale production, involving almost five hundred people, and Kralik, who must have learned from seeing Berger at work, directed rehearsals and conducted the orchestra for the actual performances. His creative contribution to the text was to provide a musical score and insert a number of choruses which strengthened the connection

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<sup>22</sup> Hermann Broch, *Kommentierte Werkausgabe*, ed. by Paul Michael Lützeler, 17 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1976–86), IX/1, 171.

<sup>23</sup> Kralik, *Tage und Werke*, pp. 143–44.

<sup>24</sup> Anon., 'Calderon's "Welttheater" im Rathaus', *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 15 June 1897, p. 5.

between dramatic performance and liturgy, thereby placing greater emphasis on the celebration of the Eucharist depicted at the end of the *auto*. Indeed, one reviewer commented that the music reminded him of 'die herrliche Gralweihe im Parsifal'.<sup>25</sup> The cast of *Das große Welttheater* consisted entirely of amateurs and, although an ensemble had formed itself over the years, one paper noted a 'Bodensatz von Dilettantismus'.<sup>26</sup> Kralik's wife Maia played Frau Welt, and Fritz Lemmermeyer added a welcome touch of comedy as the Peasant, but the young actor playing the Master, who had previously been cast as Herod in the *Dreikönigsspiel*, was thought 'etwas theatralisch und fahrig'.<sup>27</sup> Interestingly, this role was also problematic in Hofmannsthal's version of the *Welttheater*; he eventually omitted it and transferred the speeches to the angels.

Press response to *Das große Welttheater* varied considerably, not least because, by 1897, the link between political and cultural Catholicism had begun to be perceived. The *Reichspost* ran an elaborate and at times anti-Semitic publicity campaign in which Kralik declared the production to be 'ein großer Schritt weiter auf dem Wege von der heruntergekommenen Unterhaltungsbühne zu einer wahrhaft volkstümlichen, großen, das ganze Leben ergreifenden Kunst'.<sup>28</sup> Although most editors were sufficiently interested in the production as a literary curio and a social event to discuss it at some length, it is noteworthy that the biggest of the liberal newspapers, the *Neue Freie Presse*, which had produced only short, mostly unsigned reviews of the *Weihnachtsspiel*, carried only a brief anonymous report on *Das große Welttheater*, noting that the first-night audience included 'zahlreiche Mitglieder der clericalen Aristokratie und viele clericale Abgeordnete mit dem Prinzen Alois Liechtenstein an der Spitze' and concluding that only the actress playing Beauty did justice to her role.<sup>29</sup> It is also indicative of increasingly biased reporting that estimates of the audience size ranged from 6000 (in the *Fremden-Blatt*) to 2000 (in the less sympathetic *Arbeiter-Zeitung*).

The coverage of the *Fremden-Blatt* is particularly interesting, insofar as it highlights two factors that make the assessment of theatrical effectiveness so difficult, when one is dealing with festival theatre — namely, the importance of atmosphere and the impact of amateur involvement. Discussing the history

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<sup>25</sup> Gaigg von Bergheim, 'Calderon: "Das große Welttheater"', *Reichspost*, 15 June 1897, pp. 1–2 (p. 2).

<sup>26</sup> Anon., 'Das Auto im Rathause', *Fremden-Blatt*, 13 June 1897, pp. 5–6 (p. 5).

<sup>27</sup> Anon., 'Calderon's "Welttheater" im Rathhaus', p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Kralik, '"Das große Welttheater" von Calderon', *Reichspost*, 6 June 1897, p. 17.

<sup>29</sup> Anon., untitled review, *Neue Freie Presse*, 13 June 1897, p. 8.

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of the *auto sacramental*, a preview article published on 9 June suggested that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century audiences brought the same respectful devotion to this form of theatre as to the mass because they understood the substance of neither. Although the one was in Latin and the other a web of complex philosophical allegory, both succeeded in conveying a powerful atmosphere of devotion.<sup>30</sup> The sophistication of the 1897 audience, which was predominantly middle class with a good sprinkling of clergy and of the Catholic aristocracy, did not seem to have made them less willing to enter into the spirit of the play. Several reports indeed tell of a 'weihevoller Stimmung' which, with no interval to disturb it, only gave way to enthusiastic applause at the very end. It probably contributed to this atmosphere that the choruses were printed on the programmes, as on a service sheet, and the audience asked not to applaud during the performance; but the involvement of non-professional actors must also be taken into consideration. Whereas other commentators criticized poor performances, the correspondent of the *Fremden-Blatt* was enchanted and wrote of *Das große Welttheater* in the reverential manner usually reserved for the Oberammergau passion play: 'Man gewann eher den Eindruck einer frommen Kundgebung in artistischer Form als einer Aufführung, wie man sie sonst in Schauspielhäusern genießen kann.'<sup>31</sup> Rather than detracting from the artistic effect, traces of amateurism transformed the mere play into a devotional act, making it seem, like the Oberammergau event, both less and more than normal theatre. Responses of this kind suggest that Catholic drama perhaps competes with the professional theatre most effectively when it makes least effort to imitate it.

The 1897 production of Calderón's *Das große Welttheater* has been the subject of speculation amongst Hofmannsthal scholars because it coincides with the composition of Hofmannsthal's *Das kleine Welttheater* and may have been seen by him.<sup>32</sup> Whether or not he was there, Karl Kraus certainly attended the final rehearsal of *Das große Welttheater* and reviewed it for the *Breslauer Zeitung*. Predictably, his is one of the dissenting voices, and his criticisms can be set alongside those of the Social Democratic *Arbeiter-Zeitung*. Both reviews provide a serious discussion of Calderón's play but are scathing about the underlying evangelical purpose. Kraus takes pains to capture the chaotic 'it'll

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<sup>30</sup> P. W., 'Die Calderon-Aufführung im Rathause', *Fremden-Blatt*, 9 June 1897, p. 12.

<sup>31</sup> Anon., 'Das Auto im Rathause', p. 5.

<sup>32</sup> See Günther Erken, 'Hofmannsthal-Chronik: Beitrag zu einer Biographie', *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft*, n.s. 3 (1962), 239–313 (p. 254).

be all right on the night' atmosphere of the rehearsal which had to be moved indoors because of a sudden downpour and saw a crowd of nearly five hundred sodden people crammed into a hall that was too small for them and trying to go through their parts. This, he comments, is not conducive to religious reverence.<sup>33</sup> Given the elitism of the Leo-Gesellschaft, Kraus can only be amused by the choice of play: 'Aristokraten, die ein Stück aufführen, in welchem der König und der Reiche mit Schimpf und Tadel von hinnen ziehen müssen, werden sich nur mit ihrer religiösen Gesinnung entschuldigen können'.<sup>34</sup> On the topic of elitism the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* remarks that the ticket prices alone excluded the working classes, thereby nullifying the programme of large-scale 'Rekatholisierung'. The same review considers it to be the height of bad taste that a 'Prachtsarg' and not a simple wooden coffin was used to indicate the exit by which the actors should leave the 'Lebensbühne'.<sup>35</sup>

Kraus's comments on this production prepare the way for his later hostility towards Hofmannsthal's free adaptation of Calderón's play in *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* (1922) and also provide an insight into changes in the cultural climate in the quarter-century that divides the two productions. The essay 'Das Salzburger große Welttheaterschwindel' (1922) was the occasion on which Kraus chose to announce that he was leaving the Roman Catholic Church, saying that God himself had already done so. He was, however, able to write a flippant and amusing feuilleton in 1897, partly because he did not yet regard the Catholic revival as a serious cultural force, and partly because he was, in certain senses, less disturbed by it than by what he later saw as the insincere Catholicism of Hofmannsthal and Reinhardt. For Kraus, the Leo-Gesellschaft production was 'eine interessante litterarhistorische Unternehmung' but its message had no relevance for a modern audience.<sup>36</sup> He quotes a lengthy passage from the authoritative work on Calderón, Schack's three-volume *Geschichte der dramatischen Literatur und Kunst in Spanien* (1845–46), in order to inform his readers of the nature and purpose of an unfamiliar theatrical form. This contrasts sharply with Hofmannsthal who in 1922 prefaces *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* with this statement: 'Daß es

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<sup>33</sup> It is revealing that the Leo-Gesellschaft followed the professional convention of inviting the press to attend the dress-rehearsal, rather than imitating the Oberammergau passion play and excluding all outsiders until the first night.

<sup>34</sup> Karl Kraus, *Frühe Schriften*, ed. by J.J. Braakenburg, 2 vols (Munich: Kösel, 1979), II, 77–78 (p. 78).

<sup>35</sup> Anon., 'Calderon's "Welttheater" im Rathhaus', p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> Kraus, *Frühe Schriften*, II, 77.

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ein geistliches Schauspiel von Calderon gibt, mit Namen "Das große Welttheater", weiß alle Welt.' (W10 unnumbered page at start of text). The efforts of the Leo-Gesellschaft, which also re-issued a cheap edition of Eichendorff's translation, contribute to the admissibility of this assumption.<sup>37</sup>

Although Kraus questioned the play's relevance for the 1890s, he was sensitive to the political sub-texts of the production: negotiations to end a recent tramway strike had been held in the 'Volkshalle' of the City Hall, where the final rehearsal took place, a coincidence which Kraus used to point out that the 'Strahlenglanz der Ewigkeit' masked 'einen christlich-sozialen Anstrich'.<sup>38</sup> The choice of venue for the actual performance was an even clearer indication of the overlap between politics and aesthetics. From the aesthetic point of view, the Arkadenhof of Vienna's neo-Gothic City Hall, with its elaborate tracery leading the eye ever upwards, was the perfect setting for a Baroque drama in which the Lord and his angels look down upon man's earthly striving from a lofty vantage point. Calderón's Corpus Christi plays had originally been staged out of doors and in natural light, with candles or torches only being used in honour of the Eucharist. Being scheduled to start at half past five (but delayed for half an hour on the opening night by the late arrival of the royal party) the Leo-Gesellschaft production was able to continue this tradition. It also went some way towards recreating the atmosphere of the market square that people watched both from rows of seats set out in the courtyard and from windows around the sides. However, the City Hall was also the centre of the city's political life and the power-base of Karl Lueger, the Christian Social mayor whose appointment Emperor Franz Joseph had finally ratified in April 1897. The new mayor's permission had to be sought before the Arkadenhof could be used (the *Reichspost* reports on 15 May that this had been granted) and most newspapers record that Lueger attended the first night.

As well as indicating the extent to which the Leo-Gesellschaft had Lueger's backing, the choice of setting for *Das große Welttheater* was a political matter in a slightly different sense, as Kralik made clear in his preview for the *Reichspost*:

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<sup>37</sup> Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *Das große Welttheater*, trans. by Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff, Allgemeine Bücherei ed. by the Leo-Gesellschaft, 1 (Vienna: Braumüller, 1897).

<sup>38</sup> Kraus, *Frühe Schriften*, II, 78.

Wenn Religion etwas ist, das auch außerhalb der Kirche im Leben, in Staat und Stadt wirken soll, dann darf die religiöse Kunst nicht auf die Kirche beschränkt bleiben. Im Gegentheil, sie hat ihr eigentliches Apostolat draußen auf Gassen und Platz, im Theater und Concertsaal, in Haus und Familie.<sup>39</sup>

This aggressive evangelism is a direct challenge to the liberal view that a man's religious beliefs are his own private business and should not impinge on public or political life. It highlights the fact that, for Kralik, who later encouraged Catholics to take religious drama out into the streets of Vienna, the production of *Das große Welttheater* was in the vanguard of a major evangelical campaign.

For a short time, at least, the Leo-Gesellschaft continued to promote this, staging a second play in the Arkadenhof in 1898. This was *Der Ruhm Österreichs*, a Calderón *auto* (*El segundo blasón de Austria*) that had been translated by Franz Lorinser in 1867 (as *Der zweite Ruhm Oesterreichs*) and was now freely adapted by Kralik. The Austrian subject prompted Kralik to write in his epilogue of 'Calderón, den wir als Hofdichter der spanischen Habsburger kaum für einen Ausländer ansehen dürfen', his remark finding some justification in the fact that the two performances in May 1898 were not only a continuation of the Leo-Gesellschaft campaign to reform the theatre but also a loyal tribute to Emperor Franz Joseph on the occasion of his Golden Jubilee.<sup>40</sup> Since dynastic loyalty was a basic tenet of the Leo-Gesellschaft, it is not surprising that the directorate should have been willing to support a work that was at once a religious and a national festival play. This production is particularly interesting because it reveals some of the reasons why celebrational drama of this kind did not find wide acceptance.

As a means of cementing the self-image of the nation, festival theatre was an established part of nineteenth-century culture;<sup>41</sup> and Kralik's adaptation was not the only work produced for this Jubilee. Alfred von Berger, for example, wrote a three-act *Märchendrama* entitled *Habsburg* that had sixteen performances at the Deutsches Volkstheater and cast Ottokar of Bohemia as Lucifer. Whether religious or national in emphasis, the celebrational play is

<sup>39</sup> Kralik, "'Das große Welttheater" von Calderon', p. 17.

<sup>40</sup> Kralik, epilogue to Calderón de la Barca, *Der Ruhm Österreichs*, Allgemeine Bücherei ed. by the Leo-Gesellschaft, 13 (Vienna: Braumüller, 1898), p. 46.

<sup>41</sup> See Peter Sprenkel, *Die inszenierte Nation: Deutsche Festspiele 1813–1913* (Tübingen: Francke, 1991). Also very relevant here is the section headed 'History as ceremony' in Herbert Lindenberger, *Historical Drama: The Relation of Literature and Reality* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1975), pp. 78–86.

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fundamentally different from conventional drama and will inevitably be rejected as trite, simplistic and undramatic if judged by the same criteria. Just as a good many religious festival plays, Kralik's *Weihnachtsspiel* amongst them, are little more than a series of static, biblically inspired scenes punctuated by communal hymn-singing, so many patriotic festivals offer only symbolic tableaux from the country's history and an opportunity to sing much-loved patriotic songs. As such, they require the theatrical equivalent of affirmative reading, their success depending on the ability to establish a communal experience with the audience. Works of this kind are therefore most likely to be well received by those sympathetic to the occasion being celebrated, especially if, as frequently, there is a 'lay presence' amongst the actors, which always helps to reduce the separation between stage and auditorium. However, a text that undermines the conventions of the genre and demands a complex response, such as Gerhart Hauptmann's *Festspiel in deutschen Reimen* (1913), will be much disputed, to some a brave experiment, to others a shameful travesty.

Kralik's adaptation of *Der Ruhm Österreichs* opens by adding to Calderón's text a somewhat self-congratulatory prologue in which Austria's Guardian Spirit announces to the audience that she has come from heaven with this message: the Lord is pleased that his chosen people are now taking more notice of his commandments and hopes that the country's poets will make Austria the centre of a world-wide revival of faith. Lighting on this festive gathering, she is delighted to see that this process has already begun, and promises to remain with them for the duration of the play.

Als Österreichs und seiner Herrscher Schutzgeist  
Will ich auch noch im Spiele hier verweilen  
Und nicht im Spiel nur, nein, in Wirklichkeit.<sup>42</sup>

This is the first of several attempts to break down the barriers between *Spiel* and reality, a common technique in celebrational drama, which frequently uses the auditorium as part of the acting space, thereby involving the audience more closely in the action. Here, of course, it is politically motivated and endeavours to persuade the audience that Austria's historical and legendary past are relevant to and indeed part of the same reality as the everyday modern world.

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<sup>42</sup> Calderón, *Der Ruhm Österreichs*, p. 8.

*Der Ruhm Österreichs* uses the legendary piety of Rudolf I, as narrated in Schiller's ballad 'Der Graf von Habsburg' and in Grillparzer's *König Ottokars Glück und Ende*, as a framework against which to set another Habsburg legend, that of Emperor Maximilian's miraculous escape from the Martinswand, a precipitous cliff in the Austrian Tyrol. The legends, which every schoolchild would have known, made the play more accessible (if less profound) than *Das große Welttheater* and gave it a more sentimental appeal, which one might compare with that of the nativity play. The message of *Der Ruhm Österreichs*, which Kralik's adaptation conveys more starkly than the original, is that neither the personal merits of the dynasty's founder, nor the martial conquests of his successors constitute the nation's fame: that lies in the traditional piety of the Austrian people.

The distinction between history and pious legend is blurred all the more because Calderón also draws inspiration from Psalm 91.13 (quoted by Lorinser as 'ueber Aspis und Basilisk wirst du wandeln und den Löwen und den Drachen zertreten')<sup>43</sup> and has three devil figures, Dämon, Basilisk and Aspis, mingle with the historical characters. Enraged by the piety of the Emperor's heir Maximilian, who joins the simple folk worshipping in the chapel built to commemorate his ancestor's famous deed, the devils set out to undermine the Christian virtues of faith, hope and love. These too appear in allegorical form, as Fides, Spes and Caritas, along with Freidank and Frohmüt. Maximilian, dissuaded from going hunting until after the danger of avalanches has passed, plays the game of 'what would you like to be if you were not yourself?' with his allegorical entourage, a Priest, and the three devils, who have introduced themselves as travellers. This inserted game mirrors the larger battle being played out between divine and demonic forces; because the devils lose here they are more determined to win when the stakes are higher. Spes wishes to be an ear of corn, since that relies on God alone for its sustenance and goes to make communion bread; Fides wishes to be a vine and so produce the grapes for communion wine; Caritas wishes to be a stream, since God's love flows eternally. These pious wishes are applauded by the company. Not so the devils' dreams. One desires to be a palm, since that plant needs neither God nor gardener; another covets the life of the thornbush and announces that, as king of the plants, he would command corn and vine to believe only what they

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<sup>43</sup> *Don Pedro Calderon's de la Barca geistliche Festspiele*, trans. by Franz Lorinser, 18 vols, I-II (Regensburg: Manz, 1856-57), III-VII (Breslau: Schletter, 1861-65), VIII-XVIII (Breslau: the translator, 1865-72), X, 82.

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could see with their own eyes. Under the rules of the game the Priest as 'Richter' obliges them to pay a forfeit: the self-sufficient palm is deprived of all hope, while the imperious thornbush is condemned, like the Basilisk he is, forever to look upon his own ugliness.

This symbolic victory is, however, gained at a high price, for it drives the devils to target Maximilian himself. The Basilisk metamorphoses in Kralik's adaptation into a fearsome beast (Calderón makes this a lion in accordance with the psalm) and terrifies the local population; the young prince sets off in eager pursuit, only to be lured onto a high peak and trapped by an avalanche. Thus, the game leads naturally into the legend of Emperor Maximilian on the Martinswand. Although facing a slow death by starvation, Maximilian resists the devils encouraging him to take his own life. With the help of Fides, Spes and Caritas, who carry the echo of his voice, he manages to communicate to his sorrowing father down below that the Priest should celebrate the Eucharist so that he may take the sacrament in spirit. This is done, and God rewards the faith of all concerned by sending angels to transport the young man down to the valley. He is reunited with his father, thus fulfilling the prophesy of the psalm: 'Er hat seinen Engeln deinethalben befohlen, daß sie dich bewachen auf allen deinen Wegen. Sie werden dich auf den Händen tragen, damit du deinen Fuß nicht an einen Stein stoßest.'<sup>44</sup>

As a finale, the Priest leads the singing of the Austrian national anthem. The newspapers recorded that the spectators (who one evening included the American writer Mark Twain) sang along heartily with what, for a play of national celebration, was an extremely conventional ending. It is, however, worth noting that the text of the Austrian anthem made patriotism inseparable from religious faith.

Gott erhalte, Gott beschütze  
Unsern Kaiser, unser Land!  
Mächtig durch des Glaubens Stütze,  
Führ' er uns mit weiser Hand!<sup>45</sup>

Here again one can glimpse the agenda of the Leo-Gesellschaft: *Der Ruhm Österreichs* which, like the Austrian national anthem, places considerable emphasis on the religious foundation of the dynasty, may be seen as an attempt

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<sup>44</sup> *Don Pedro Calderon's de la Barca geistliche Festspiele*, X, 81.

<sup>45</sup> Calderón, *Der Ruhm Österreichs*, p. 43.

to set the Church in a more positive light, to rekindle that 'Pietas Austriaca' which, until the late eighteenth century, had been inseparable from dynastic loyalty. In so doing, it brushes aside the fact that many Austrians resented the continuing influence of the clergy on education and marital law and were reluctant to put the nation's fate into God's hands, or at least into those of his Church on earth.

Although *Der Ruhm Österreichs* received less coverage in the non-Catholic press than *Das große Welttheater* (the *Neue Freie Presse*, for example, carried only a very brief announcement), most reviews were favourable. The play is based on a familiar story, has a clear structure and poses few difficult questions, although some of its assumptions of course rankle with non-Catholics. Because the production was part of the Jubilee celebrations, those newspapers which were not inclined to be complimentary kept their reviews short; even in the Social Democratic *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, which disapproved wholeheartedly of the play's ideological thrust, criticism was circumspect and dwelt on points of detail, such as the red eyes and inexpertly applied make-up of Frau Kralik, who played the Guardian Spirit of Austria.<sup>46</sup>

It is striking that the most scathing review of *Der Ruhm Österreichs*, which appeared in the newly founded journal *Die Wage*, makes no mention of the Imperial Jubilee, instead discussing the play as part of the Leo-Gesellschaft programme. Opening with the sarcastic remark that Calderón's *autos* are 'der typische Ausdruck der kritiklosen Glaubensdummheit eines Volkes, welches wie kein anderes unter der absoluten Herrschaft des Weihwedels und des Krummstabes ein jämmerlich bevormundetes Dasein fristete', the reviewer makes no concession whatever to the characteristics of celebrational drama;<sup>47</sup> instead he criticizes the lack of psychological credibility and mocks both the extravagance of Calderón's allegories and the blatant artificiality of the plot. He finds it ludicrous that Maximilian never mentions looking for a way down from the cliff, and describes the *Spiel* interlude thus: 'Auch Erzherzog Max [...] hat jedoch vorläufig nichts Besseres zu thun, als, auf einem Stein sitzend, über die Geheimnisse der Messe nachzudenken.'<sup>48</sup> This refusal to accept the *auto* on its own terms suggests that, by the 1890s, Calderón's style of celebrational drama, with its elaborate use of allegory and thinly veiled political message,

<sup>46</sup> Anon., 'Der Ruhm Oesterreichs', *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 21 May 1898, p. 7.

<sup>47</sup> Wolfgang von Wurzbach, 'Zur Wiederaufführung eines spanischen Autos', *Die Wage*, 1 (1898), 369–70 (p. 369).

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 370.

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had become alien to large sections of the theatre-going public and therefore stood little chance of finding a place in the professional repertoire.

It is a tacit admission of defeat that there were no more theatrical ventures after 1898. Although the Leo-Gesellschaft remained active until 1938, and Kralik continued to be involved for many years, plans to establish a 'Patronatsverein der geistlichen Festspiele' were quietly dropped. Kralik writes in his autobiography that the directorate, who had initially been so enthusiastic about staging his *Weihnachtsspiel*, gradually lost interest, leaving the time-consuming organizational work to himself and his wife. One suspects, however, that the lack of enthusiasm in practical matters was symptomatic of a deeper unease, a feeling that these productions provoked at best a sentimental response and did little to improve the standing of the Roman Catholic faith in that day and age.

Guarded remarks in Kralik's autobiography make clear that from 1898 onwards there was a progressive faction in the Leo-Gesellschaft which one would expect to have been dismissive of his cultural endeavours. Its leading light was Albert Ehrhard, a young church historian who joined the theology faculty at the University of Vienna and the Leo-Gesellschaft in 1898 and quickly won the support of such influential members as Schindler and Belopotoczky. He caused a rift in the society and set off heated debate in the Catholic press when he published *Der Katholizismus und das zwanzigste Jahrhundert* (1902). It argued that old-fashioned Catholicism had little to offer the modern world and warned against over-emphasizing the importance of the Church's medieval heritage. Assertions of this kind were the starting-point for the *katholischer Literaturstreit*, a dispute between liberal and conservative intellectuals which was to divide German-speaking Catholics in the years leading up to 1914 and saw Kralik vigorously defending the conservative, 'integralist' view that Catholic literary production should remain aloof from modern stylistic developments and from all forms of commercialism.

The theatrical ventures undertaken by the Leo-Gesellschaft in the 1890s had certainly been an admission of alienation from mainstream culture. The gesture was not, however, one of withdrawal; rather, they demonstrated a will to combat the decadence of liberal culture by offering alternative fare. Initial responses were encouraging. One reviewer wrote in 1893 that 'das Weihnachtsspiel, durchwegs mit Mitgliedern des Burgtheaters in der Oper aufgeführt, wo die Bedingungen für gutes Sehen und Hören und für die Wirkungen des Maschinen- und Decorationswesens ungleich prächtiger sind, müßte einen

überwältigenden Eindruck machen'.<sup>49</sup> To see that or a similar work integrated into the professional repertoire in what would inevitably have been a token gesture was not, however, the ambition; and the reform programme pursued by the more radical members of the Leo-Gesellschaft had little chance of success. Firstly, although the *Weihnachtsspiel* had broad appeal, the allegorical forms of drama subsequently promoted by the society were too remote from most people's experience of the theatre; and, secondly, their Catholic tendentiousness ensured that aesthetic judgements quickly became clouded by political prejudice. Furthermore, the Leo-Gesellschaft productions suffered from the attempt to reach a good artistic standard and compete with the professional theatre, insofar as this laid them open to caustic criticism from the liberal and left-wing press.

Neither the Leo-Gesellschaft's ambition to change the character of Vienna's cultural life, nor its failure was, however, unique in the period around 1900. Its objectives were strikingly similar to those of the Kaiserjubiläums-Stadttheater, which opened in 1898, significantly taking up the cudgels against liberal culture just as the Leo-Gesellschaft was mounting its last production. The idea behind this shortlived and much-opposed venture, which was commonly known as Vienna's 'Aryan theatre', was that it should revive a more Christian and Germanic culture, thereby challenging the predominantly Jewish and cosmopolitan character of the established theatres. Although the project had political backing, the liberal press was bitterly opposed; the theatre-going public, which came largely from the middle classes, stayed away; and those who might have been in sympathy with the cultural ideology, the artisan class from which the Christian Socials and *Deutschnationalen* drew much of their support, were either not in the habit of attending the theatre or lacked the income to do so with any regularity. After only five seasons, the 'Aryan theatre' was almost bankrupt and its director Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn resigned.<sup>50</sup> On this occasion Karl Kraus concluded that 'aus dem Parteigeist geborne Institutionen [...] sind an sich lebensunfähig; im luftleeren Raum erdacht, gehen sie an den Einflüssen der sozialen Atmosphäre zugrunde'.<sup>51</sup> This was as true of the Leo-Gesellschaft campaign as it was of the

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<sup>49</sup> Anon., 'Des Weihnachtsspieles erste Aufführung', *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt*, 28 December 1893, p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> Richard S. Geehr, *Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn and the Aryan Theatre of Vienna: 1898–1903* (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1973).

<sup>51</sup> Karl Kraus, *Die Fackel*, 145 (28 October 1903), 23.

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Kaiserjubiläums-Stadttheater, but only because both were fixated on supplanting the professional theatre and looked to the wrong audience. As Chapter Five will show, a more effective approach was found, for the Christian Social camp, when Kralik switched his attention from semi-professional to amateur drama and from the educated middle classes, whom the Leo-Gesellschaft had wanted to win over, to the largely working-class membership of Catholic lay organizations.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### POPULAR THEATRE AND MASS SPECTACLE

Once the Leo-Gesellschaft had lost interest in staging traditional forms of religious drama, Kralik had to find a new outlet for his talents and did so by turning his attention to Vienna's Catholic parishes where, by 1900, a comprehensive network of social and cultural organizations had begun to establish itself. This change of focus coincides with the beginning of Max Reinhardt's career as a director in the professional theatre and also with Hofmannsthal's first attempts at writing full-scale drama. They have in common a hesitant, experimental approach which initially suggests eclecticism rather than a clear sense of purpose; but in all three cases there is also an underlying populism, a desire to make their work accessible to sections of the population which had previously had little contact with the theatre. Kralik was the first to clarify his methods and objectives, when controversies within the Catholic camp obliged him to defend his conservatism. With his adaptation of *Jedermann*, Hofmannsthal too came to see the power of cultic theatrical experience, endorsing Reinhardt's use of elaborate theatrical means to achieve it.

#### *The Catholic 'Vereinsbühnen'*

If one looks at how well Kralik was known in literary circles towards 1900 and how he was viewed, it seems that, although his involvement with the Leo-Gesellschaft had gained him some publicity, commentators were uncertain of his abilities, and the sheer breadth of his earlier literary interests made them wary of pigeonholing him prematurely. However, Kralik's cultural orientation became clearer when his play *Kaiser Marcus Aurelius in Wien* (1897) was staged both in the professional theatre and by Catholic amateurs, its fortunes persuading him to abandon pseudo-professional drama in favour of modest amateur production. This resolution brought Kralik into close contact with Catholic *Vereine* in and around Vienna, and especially with those catering for

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young people. His experiences with these groups help to explain the conservative stance which he subsequently adopted in the *katholischer Literaturstreit*.

The diversity of the projects with which Kralik had been involved since the 1880s had gained him a reputation as a purveyor of literary curiosities: following the appearance of *Offenbarung* (1883), he had published a volume of *Deutsche Puppenspiele* (1884) together with Josef Winter, and pieced together *Das Volksschauspiel vom Doktor Faust* (1895) from pre-Goethean sources; he had been involved in the Hans-Sachs-Abend staged at the Burgtheater in 1894, and uncovered a thousand-year-old play by the nun Roswitha von Gandersheim in 1897; in conjunction with the Leo-Gesellschaft, he had revived the *Weihnachtsspiel* and the Corpus Christi play *Das große Welttheater*; and, with *Der Ruhm Österreichs*, he had made a personal contribution to the Jubilee celebrations. The impression created by all this activity is one of assiduity and cultural eclecticism rather than creative originality.

Kralik first came onto the literary scene when he contributed two poems to the collection *Moderne Dichtercharaktere* (1884). Although these had looked promising, subsequent publications suffered from what Kraus called 'eine gewisse chronische Erfolglosigkeit'.<sup>1</sup> For many years Kralik was an unknown quantity, a writer who might one day produce a great work but might equally well continue to wallow in mediocrity. The respected critic Moritz Necker was rather more charitable than Kraus, writing in 1894 that Kralik was 'ein Wiener Dichter, den die Eingeweihten der Wiener Literatur persönlich und literarisch sehr schätzen, der aber dem größeren Publikum trotz seiner ernstlichen Bestrebungen bisher ziemlich unbekannt geblieben ist'.<sup>2</sup> Five years later, Bahr echoed the point about Kralik being little known but saw it as a deliberate policy:

Herr Kralik ist ein Wiener Autor, der nur einer kleinen Gemeinde bekannt ist und damit sogar ein bißchen kokettiert. Er will nicht mit der Menge gehen, er sondert sich ab und strebt aus unserer ganzen Zeit weg. Wohin, erfährt man freilich nicht recht. Er wird zur klerikalen Partei gezählt, scheint aber nicht katholischer zu sein, als es jede romantische, vage schmachtende Natur heute ist. Im ganzen macht er einen ungewissen und unfreien

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<sup>1</sup> Kraus, *Frühe Schriften*, I, 155.

<sup>2</sup> Moritz Necker in *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung*, 27 September 1894. Quoted in Truxa, *Richard von Kralik*, p. 54.

## POPULAR THEATRE AND MASS SPECTACLE

Eindruck. Doch kann man nicht leugnen, daß er sich mit Ernst und Eifer um die großen Dinge der Menschheit zu bemühen scheint.<sup>3</sup>

Although Bahr was uncertain about both Kralik's artistic leanings and his political bias, he recognized and respected the underlying seriousness of purpose.

Towards the end of the 1890s Kralik was viewed with increasing unease, but he still had a potential connection to what is now thought of as the literary mainstream. At a time when naturalism had largely given way to symbolism and drama was making increasing use of myth and mysticism, Kralik's aesthetics were not so different from those of many other writers who looked to the Romantic tradition for inspiration but had as yet found no distinct voice of their own. This was the main cause of Bahr's uncertainty; Necker too admitted to knowing little about Kralik's politics, but wrote:

Tatsache ist, daß Kralik mit seinem Gegensatze zur mechanistischen Weltanschauung [...] durchaus nicht vereinzelt dasteht; es ist ferner eine beachtenswerte Tatsache, daß die moderne Kunst in der Malerei, in der Musik und auch in der Poesie jene Richtung auf die Religion genommen hat, die Kralik an keiner rechten Kunst vermissen kann.<sup>4</sup>

The difference was, of course, that the religious element in Kralik's work was far more than a vague mysticism or an aesthetic adornment; and the connection with mainstream liberal culture became increasingly tenuous as Kralik was seen to align himself unmistakably with the clerical wing of the Christian Social party.

This began to happen in 1897, partly because of the literary projects with which Kralik was involved, and partly because, in the year when Lueger took up his mayoral office, commentators were especially sensitive to the increased prominence of both political and cultural Catholicism. As was clear in Chapter Four, both Kraus and the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* recognized the tendentiousness of *Das große Welttheater*. When, in October 1897, Kralik organized an amateur production of *Fall und Büße Marias, der Nichte des Einsiedlers Abraham* by the nun Roswitha von Gandersheim (born 1835), other papers picked up the programmatic basis of Kralik's interest in medieval and Baroque drama. Admittedly, it was difficult not to, for Kralik began the evening, held under the

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<sup>3</sup> Hermann Bahr, 'Sokrates, von Richard von Kralik', *Die Zeit*, 19 (1899), 173.

<sup>4</sup> M. Nr. [Moritz Necker], *Neue Freie Presse*, 10 October 1894. Quoted in Truxa, *Richard von Kralik*, p. 55.

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auspices of the 'Verein für erweiterte Frauenbildung', with a forty-minute lecture entitled 'Roswitha und ihre Dramen'.<sup>5</sup> Starting from the facts that Roswitha was German, a nun, and well-educated, Kralik first observed that the medieval church continued the tradition of classical learning, and then went on to talk of his own ambition to blend national, Christian and classical culture, and to tell his predominantly female audience that they, having less contact with secular modern society, should be more in touch with these ideals than their menfolk and had a duty to promote them.<sup>6</sup> The correspondent of the *Wiener Tagblatt*, for one, was horrified; under the title 'Theatralische Klosterglocken' he alerted his readers to this insidious clericalism: 'Unter dem literarischen Schafspelz verbirgt sich der klerikale Wolf.'<sup>7</sup> However, this particular wolf had begun to emerge from his disguise.

Back in January 1894 the *Reichspost* told its readers that Kralik had wanted to stage the *Weihnachtsspiel* in a more 'democratic' manner than the Leo-Gesellschaft was prepared to consider, and that he would have liked to involve Catholic workers' organizations rather than Burgtheater actors in the venture.<sup>8</sup> Kralik took a step towards this with the play *Kaiser Marcus Aurelius in Wien* (1897), and its fortunes helped to shape his conviction that Christian drama should not try to compete with the commercial theatre. He wrote it for a Catholic youth group in the Viennese suburb of Mariahilf, who asked him for a text resembling a Calderón *auto* but on a specifically Austrian theme and written in such a way as to be within the capabilities of young amateurs. Kralik was pleased to be asked and delighted with the end-product, staged in the Großer Musikvereinsaal on 18 November 1897.

*Kaiser Marcus Aurelius in Wien* is one of Kralik's most original dramatic works and more overtly political than anything he had previously written. Clearly, he was trying very hard to produce a text with which the young performers would be able to identify but which would also teach a moral lesson. The play follows the adventures of three young men from north Germany who come south hoping to make their fortunes and arrive in Vienna just as the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius is about to win a divinely assisted

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<sup>5</sup> This was published as 'Roswitha von Gandersheim', in Kralik, *Neue Kulturstudien* (Münster i.W.: Verlag der Alphonsus-Buchhandlung, 1903), pp. 244–60.

<sup>6</sup> There are significant parallels between Kralik's approach and the campaigning methods of Karl Lueger, who worked hard to win the support of women's groups. See the chapter on 'The Lueger Gretl' in Geehr, *Karl Lueger*, pp. 209–32.

<sup>7</sup> Hans Kobbel, 'Theatralische Klosterglocken', *Wiener Tagblatt*, 26 October 1897, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Anon., 'Kraliks Mysterium', p. 5.

victory against the Marcomanni at the shrine of Maria Lanzendorf. This patchwork of myths — the founding of the house of Auersperg, St Luke preaching the gospel just outside Vienna (Kralik tried to establish Maria Lanzendorf as a place of pilgrimage), and Marcus Aurelius winning a miraculous victory nearby and possibly dying in Vienna — gives the play the desired local flavour. Kralik then uses the experiences of the three central figures to examine possible responses towards the contemporary *Nationalitäten-hader*: should they support their fellow Germans against the imperial power, should they abandon patriotism and embrace the values of Roman civilization, or should they just enjoy life and not concern themselves with such issues? The demands of one's Christian faith make the decision even more difficult. Reminding his audience that Christ said one should render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, Kralik argues the Church's official line that the *Reichsidee* should take precedence over forms of national allegiance because the Austro-Hungarian Empire is a continuation of the Holy Roman Empire. At the same time he hopes for an ultimate synthesis of 'Römische Bildung, germanische Kraft, / Christliche Milde und Willenszucht' to make Austria into a genuinely civilized and Christian nation.<sup>9</sup>

The *Reichspost* described *Kaiser Marcus Aurelius in Wien* as 'ein kleines Welttheater, wo nicht Menschen in *abstracto*, sondern Jünglinge, gute und minder gute, ihre Rolle spielen, sich selber und allen anderen zum guten oder abschreckenden Beispiel'.<sup>10</sup> What is implicit is that, even though the play may have achieved its original objective of being relevant to young Catholics, it had far less universal appeal than Calderón's world theatre and was not therefore suitable for a wider audience. However, less than two years after it was first performed, Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn, director of the newly opened Kaiserjubiläums-Stadttheater, included *Kaiser Marcus Aurelius* in the programme for his first season. Kralik, who had known Müller-Guttenbrunn for many years, sympathized with the cultural ambitions of the 'Aryan theatre' but, having seen the difficulties encountered by the Leo-Gesellschaft, was rightly cautious about the method.

*Kaiser Marcus Aurelius* was played twice during Holy Week in 1899, re-using the costumes from Kleist's *Die Hermannsschlacht* and, according to Kralik, inadequately rehearsed. Although the *Reichspost* tried to drum up

<sup>9</sup> Kralik, *Kaiser Marcus Aurelius in Wien: Ein Weithespiel mit Chören*, Allgemeine Bücherei ed. by the Leo-Gesellschaft, 7 (Vienna and Leipzig: Braumüller, [1897]), p. 41.

<sup>10</sup> Isung, untitled review, *Reichspost*, 11 November 1897: italics in original.

support, it was a predictable flop: audiences were thin, and the liberal and left-wing press panned it. Reviewers resented the obvious tendentiousness and, almost by extension, denigrated Kralik's abilities as a dramatist. They, unlike the Catholic youth group, were not prepared to allow the fantastical mix of myth and legend to wash over them and, not accepting it as a legitimate subject for a celebrational play, expected a tightly constructed plot with convincing human characters rather than the two-dimensionality and static tableaux of that genre. The *Neue Freie Presse* accused Kralik of trying to revive the theatre as the handmaiden of the Church; the *Wiener Tagblatt* was caustic, commenting, 'Wenn Herrn Dr von Kralik das Dichten zustößt, kommt immer etwas sehr Langweiliges heraus [...]'; and Kralik's former friend Engelbert Pernerstorfer, now a leading Social Democrat and theatre critic of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, not only called it 'diese poetisch gequälte Mache' but commented that the rebirth of Catholic literature was even less uplifting than that of Catholic politics. Pernerstorfer added insult to injury by pointing out that *Kaiser Marcus Aurelius* was not even to Müller-Guttenbrunn's taste: the lacklustre production was a political gesture intended to pacify right-wing Catholics amongst the supporters of the 'Aryan theatre'.<sup>11</sup> This was largely true; Kralik knew it, and made up his mind that he wanted no such alms. Henceforth, he wrote drama only for amateur performance and almost exclusively on request.

Although Kralik frequently asserted that he was sure of substantial rewards in heaven and therefore sought no earthly laurel wreath, he clearly was sensitive to criticism and could not have failed to see that his vision of cultural regeneration was making little headway in the professional theatre. The correspondent of *Die Wage* shows considerable insight into Kralik's dilemma when he writes:

Richard Kralik gilt als Dichter — in seinen Kreisen. So lange er mit seinen Dichtungen in den durch deren Richtung selbstgezogenen Schranken bleibt, mag die fromme Absicht dem Urtheil jene Milde einflößen, die der ursprünglichen Anschauung des Wesens entspricht, in deren Dienst er seine Werke stellt. An diese Rücksichten ist jedoch die objektive Kritik nicht gebunden, sobald sie in das Licht einer öffentlichen Schaubühne gerückt erscheinen und dadurch den Anspruch erheben, als Kunstwerk ästhetisch beurtheilt zu werden.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> These reviews may all be found in 'Zeitungsausschnitte über Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn', 9 vols, I, 202–10; held in the Druckschriftensammlung of the Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek, L 70.128: Anon., 'Kaiser-Jubiläums-Theater', *Neue Freie Presse*, 30 March 1899, p. 7; —pp—, 'Währinger Stadttheater', *Wiener Tagblatt*, 30 March 1899, p. 7; e. p. [Engelbert Pernerstorfer], 'Stadttheater', *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 30 March 1899, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> O. F., untitled review, *Die Wage*, 2 (1899), 236.

The devotional character of Kralik's work, like that of the Oberammergau passion play, unsettles the critic, but he feels obliged to judge it on its aesthetic merits, since it aims to compete on those terms. Whereas the decennial passion play was in a sense committed to this by 1900, Kralik effectively abandoned the attempt. Making a virtue out of a necessity, he looked for and found a more appreciative audience in the many Catholic *Vereine* which sprang up around the turn of the century and were keen to use drama as a vehicle for their evangelical and cultural aspirations.<sup>13</sup> The step could be justified ideologically as looking towards a more broadly based, popular, and therefore more lasting cultural revival. Here, amongst ordinary Catholic people rather than in the grand plans of the Leo-Gesellschaft or in Müller-Guttenbrunn's struggling establishment, was the true spirit of Oberammergau.

In the early 1890s Kralik had written a number of one-act dramas which reworked biblical and legendary material. The idea behind this concession to modern taste had been to pair them into *Dilogien* which would set comic and tragic perspectives on the same subject side by side. This variation on his *Festspielidee* never got off the ground because it found insufficient support. But now he saw that the more compact form was more versatile than the longer passion plays and eminently suited to modest amateur production: one-act plays could be inserted singly into a varied evening's programme, along with music, readings or discussion; the number of characters was restricted, elaborate props, costumes and scenery were not essential, and outdoor performance was also feasible.

The Catholic youth group in Mariahilf requested a second play in 1898, and Kralik obliged with *Die Erwartung des Weltgerichtes*, which they first performed on 25 September, braving a downpour out in the Schwarzenberggarten. Set entirely in the outer courts of heaven, *Die Erwartung* is not so much a play as a gloomy dialogized sermon in which a collection of angels, saints and prophets attempt to convince the audience that the Last Judgement is at hand and may only be averted by a mass return to traditional piety. Since the first performance came shortly after the assassination of Empress Elisabeth, the sense of apocalyptic foreboding picked up the mood of many Catholic monarchists, even if it did not transform the nation.

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<sup>13</sup> See Walter Sauer, *Katholisches Vereinswesen in Wien: Zur Geschichte des christlich-konservativen Lagers vor 1914*, Geschichte und Sozialkunde, 5 (Salzburg: Neugebauer, 1980). Between 1880 and 1899 the number of Catholic organizations in Vienna doubled from one to two hundred (p. 40).

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There was a substantial connection between Kralik's emerging cultural programme, the audience with which it found favour, and the cultural politics of Karl Lueger. Geehr's biography of the Christian Social mayor points out that his cultural tastes were very close to those of the Catholic Lower Austrian '5 Gulden man' whose political interests his party brought to the forefront of attention. Rejecting Viennese high liberal culture as too international, too intellectual and too much the preserve of the Jewish middle classes, Lueger made political capital from his preference for cultural forms which were more sentimental and characterized by a *völkisch* and religious orientation.<sup>14</sup> In particular, Lueger favoured allegorical historical drama, a genre which Kralik also promoted, writing such plays as *Die Türken vor Wien* (1883) and *Maximilian* (1885), and later the heptalogy *Die Revolution* (1908). Lueger most probably met Kralik in the late 1880s when both attended the 'Ente-Abende', discussion evenings convened by Schindler to work out the policies of the embryonic Christian Social party, and he supported Kralik's cultural endeavours throughout his mayoralty.<sup>15</sup> The *Fremden-Blatt* reported, for example, that Lueger attended *Die Erwartung des Weltgerichtes* when it was revived at the Großer Musikvereinssaal in October 1898, and was cheered loudly by the audience as he arrived and left.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, towards the end of Lueger's career, Kralik seems to have had significant influence on his cultural politics, insofar as he admired Kralik's attempt to redefine the Austrian national identity as a blend of Greek culture, Germanic myth and Christianity, and privately backed his proposal that the municipality should build a Viennese Valhalla, adorned with motifs derived from all three cultures, on one of the hills overlooking the city.<sup>17</sup>

Around 1900, Kralik's vision of a regenerated national culture in which Christianity would be a major unifying force not only began to gain ground in Austria but also found parallels in Germany. Earlier in the nineteenth century Paul de Lagarde had rejected the established faiths and advocated that the heroic religion of the future should combine the moral teaching of the Gospels

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<sup>14</sup> Geehr, *Karl Lueger*, pp. 266–69.

<sup>15</sup> Both names are included in the attendance lists given in Friedrich Funder's biography of Schindler, *Aufbruch zur christlichen Sozialreform* (Vienna and Munich: Herold, 1953), p. 62.

<sup>16</sup> Anon., 'Die Erwartung des Weltgerichtes', *Fremden-Blatt*, 10 October 1898, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> Geehr, *Karl Lueger*, p. 373, note 9; for details of the proposal see Kralik, *Ein Vorschlag zur künstlerischen Ausstattung des Leopoldsberges* (Vienna: Opitz, 1903).

with 'die natürlichen Eigenschaften des deutschen Volkes'.<sup>18</sup> But Julius Langbehn's bestselling *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (1890), which had a profound effect throughout the German-speaking world, again included cultic Christianity in the recipe for German greatness. Kralik read *Rembrandt als Erzieher* as soon as it appeared and, agreeing with Langbehn's critique of liberal culture, recorded favourable impressions. Their ideological affinity grew as Langbehn, who was to convert to Catholicism in 1900, gave it the edge over Protestantism in later editions.<sup>19</sup> In Germany, where writers had responded to Bismarck's demand that they should be nationally productive by abandoning cosmopolitan Berlin and finding new inspiration in the conservative provinces, the image of the 'Rembrandtdeutsche' fostered a Protestant *Heimatkunst* movement led by such men as Ernst Wachler, Adolf Bartels and Friedrich Lienhard. Also at this time the traditional anti-clericalism of Austrian provincial literature began to be transformed into its opposite, with the result that Catholicism was ultimately interwoven with the ideology of *Blut und Boden*.<sup>20</sup>

Both in Germany and in Austria, turn-of-the-century *Heimatkunst* was more monumental and determined by ideology than nineteenth-century forms. Wachler stated in a programmatic essay that he did not wish to produce more small-scale provincial realism but monumental art, 'die in der Heimat wurzelt, aber das Weltgetriebe überblickt und richtet'.<sup>21</sup> Since the ambition was to bring this art to a mass audience, cultic theatre with a strong mythical component was a popular vehicle; and in 1903 Wachler founded the Harzer Bergtheater near Thale, an open-air arena devoted to the promulgation of works which glorified the Germanic heritage. Kralik's various autobiographical accounts reveal that he was on good terms with Wachler and probably had some ideological influence on him. Feeling that Wachler had taken up the challenge of reforming the professional theatre by competing with it just when he had abandoned that tactic, Kralik followed the progress of the Harzer

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<sup>18</sup> Paul de Lagarde, 'Die Religion der Zukunft' in Lagarde, *Deutsche Schriften*, 2 vols (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1878), I, 218–55 (p. 238).

<sup>19</sup> On Langbehn see Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1961), pp. 97–180.

<sup>20</sup> See Karlheinz Rossbacher, *Heimatkunstabewegung und Heimatroman: Zu einer Literatursoziologie der Jahrhundertwende* (Stuttgart: Klett, 1975), especially pp. 22–25.

<sup>21</sup> Ernst Wachler, 'Eine Dichtung der Volksgesamtheit', reproduced in *Literarische Manifeste der Jahrhundertwende 1890–1910*, ed. by Erich Ruprecht and Dieter Bänisch (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1970), pp. 326–29 (p. 327).

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Bergtheater with interest and wrote *Der Dichtertrank* to be performed there in 1904.

Although sympathetic to the Pan-German brand of *Heimatkunst*, Kralik continued to be primarily a Catholic dramatist, focusing his efforts on the city of Vienna and its Catholic community. In 1899 he helped to set up the Christliche Wiener Volksbühne, an amateur troupe which he hoped would take works such as *Die Erwartung des Weltgerichtes* out into the parks and squares of the city. Although, as Chapter Six will show, a similar idea was to be very successful in the 1920s, this venture soon collapsed, largely because the necessary Catholic infrastructure was not yet in place. For this group Kralik did, however, write a festival drama to celebrate the advent of the new century. Here, once again, he tried to combine a historical perspective with a decidedly modern emphasis, and reflected the atmosphere in his own circles, if not the feelings of the whole populace. The three acts of *Das Heil der Welt* are independent playlets, dealing successively with the birth of Christ, the founding of the Church, and the present day. The third part, entitled 'Hin zu Rom!', deals with the conversion of an effete Social Democratic member of the proletariat who ultimately sets out on a pilgrimage to Rome, and is a defiant challenge to the 'Los von Rom!' movement started up by Schönerer in 1897. For parishioners in the Lower Austrian village of Eibestäl, who were trying to raise funds for a new church building and did not want to perform a passion play in the same year as Oberammergau (1900), Kralik reworked the final part of this and added *Der zwölfjährige Jesus* and *Josephs Tod*. As well as producing *Das Kaiserfest* (1899) for the *Volksbühne* in the Bohemian town of Hörtitz, Kralik also built up a modest export trade in Calderón *autos* to which his creative contribution was most often a number of judicious excisions, a prologue, and a few dignified choruses. He adapted *Die Ähren der Ruth* (1905) and later *Der heilige Parnaß* (1910) for the nuns of a Belgian convent; and in 1906 a Berlin student organization requested *Die Geheimnisse der Messe*, this play later being taken up by the Berlin Calderón Society.

Two points require clarification here. Firstly, made-to-measure playwriting was only a small part of Kralik's contribution to the activation of the Catholic laity: he was greatly in demand as a guest speaker and made a point of accepting such invitations whenever possible. As well as being music critic for the *Vaterland* for several years, he wrote articles in numerous journals and newspapers, so many that one wonders how he found sufficient time. Secondly, although Kralik's phenomenal productivity made him the undisputed

poet laureate of the Catholic grass-roots in Austria, one only needs to peruse the fourth volume of the *Deutsch-Österreichische Literaturgeschichte* to see that, by the late 1890s, he was not alone in writing for that audience. For example, Meinrad Sadil, a Benedictine monk who taught at Vienna's Schottengymnasium, gave Catholics *Der Menschensohn* (1897), a series of twelve epic scenes depicting Christ's life on earth. He, unusually, ventured into the professional theatre with *Tantalos* and *Die Friedensrose*, two mythical allegories which dressed up Christian moral teachings in classical garb and were staged with partial success by Müller-Guttenbrunn.<sup>22</sup>

Kralik's close associate Adolf Innerkofler was more typical in that he had few literary pretensions: he wrote exclusively for amateur performance and was involved in 1912 with the revival of the passion play at Erl, which has the distinction of predating Oberammergau by some eighteen years. Innerkofler, originally a Tyrolean priest but later based in Vienna, was one of a number of Catholic clergymen in the Austrian provinces who dramatized biblical events for their parishioners to perform, and in so doing made a name for themselves in modest Catholic circles.<sup>23</sup> Another such was Friedrich Georg Holweck, who produced a version of the English Everyman play at the very same time that Hofmannsthal was working on it. He, however, wrote in his introduction: 'Meine Arbeit ist unseren katholischen Amateurbühnen gewidmet; sie soll praktischen Zwecken dienen und zeigen, wie man heutzutage mit Erfolg das alte ehrwürdige Spiel aufführen kann.'<sup>24</sup> Practical theatre which served a clearly defined evangelical function was also what Kralik learned to produce in the early years of the twentieth century. However, as its popularity amongst ordinary Catholic people grew, so dissenting voices were raised within the Church, not only suggesting that youth groups could be more profitably occupied, but also that the Catholic community as a whole should broaden and raise its cultural expectations.

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<sup>22</sup> Geehr, *Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn and the Aryan Theater of Vienna*, pp. 216–17, 275–76.

<sup>23</sup> Friederike Valentin, 'Pater Adolf Innerkofler (1872–1942): Priester — Volksprediger — Schriftsteller' (unpublished thesis, University of Vienna, 1975).

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Michel Vanhelleputte, 'Herkunft und Originalität von Hofmannsthals "Jedermann"', in *Hugo von Hofmannsthal: Jedermann: Das Spiel vom Sterben des reichen Mannes und Max Reinhardts Inszenierungen*, ed. by Edda Leisler and Gisela Prossnitz (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1973), pp. 81–97 (pp. 94–95).

*Theatre in the Catholic Literary Dispute*

Kralik's satisfying experiences with amateur theatricals helped to convince him that drama did have instructive value and that the special character of Catholic literature should be preserved at all costs. As a result, he began to make a name for himself as the spokesman, in aesthetic matters at least, of the conservative, 'integralist' viewpoint. The fear that secular, scientific progress was leaving Catholics behind had alarmed Catholic intellectuals for a number of years. In 1898 the focus of the *Inferiorität* debate switched from education to literature. There appeared a pamphlet which posed the question, *Steht die katholische Belletristik auf der Höhe der Zeit?* (1898). A second followed under the title *Die literarischen Aufgaben der deutschen Katholiken* (1899). The author, signing himself 'Veremundus', suggested that Catholic literature was inferior because its practitioners were hopelessly out of touch with modern literary forms and techniques:

die katholische Partei ist um mehrere Jahrhunderte zurückgeblieben, da sie der Entwicklung des Stiles nicht folgte, sie ist verbauert, sie versteht die Hälfte der Wörter, deren sich die Schriftsteller bedienen, nicht mehr, sie ist, mit einem Worte, zu einem Lager von Illitteraten geworden. Unfähig, das Gute vom Schlechten zu sondern, mißbilligte sie gleichzeitig den Schmutz der Pornographie und die Werke der Kunst. Kurz, sie hat solche Dummheiten gemacht, so ungeheuren Blödsinn zu Markte getragen, daß sie der vollen Verachtung anheimfiel und nicht mehr mitzählte.<sup>25</sup>

The author focused on prose fiction because novels and magazine serializations were read by increasingly large sectors of the population, Catholics amongst them. Catholic critics, who were predominantly clergymen, had tended to condemn the genre, which usually depicted secular bourgeois society and thrived on tales of adultery and immorality, as likely to undermine faith and therefore best avoided. But the appalling standard of fiction published in Catholic journals revealed that they had nothing of any literary value to set in its place and no sensible criteria for evaluation of the genre.

Kralik evidently felt that these pamphlets presented a false picture of the situation and belittled his own literary achievements. He responded in a speech to the Leo-Gesellschaft, entitled 'Über die gegenwärtige Stellung der katholischen Literatur'. There he warned against 'subjective criticism' that

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<sup>25</sup> *Steht die katholische Belletristik auf der Höhe der Zeit? Eine literarische Gewissensfrage von Veremundus* (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1898), p. 47.

disregarded the authority of the Church and took no account of the traditions which, in his view, set Catholic literature apart from and above commercial literary production. He argued that 'Belletristik', which was produced for financial gain and intended to entertain the public, could not be compared with 'Dichtkunst', which was the work of God-given genius and intended 'für sein Volk, für die Menschheit, für die Zukunft'.<sup>26</sup> For Kralik, only lyric poetry, the heroic epic, the *Volksbuch* and restricted forms of drama could be classed as high art, whilst anything that smacked of journalism or commercial entertainment was rejected as 'Belletristik'.

The author of the pamphlets revealed himself as Karl Muth (1867–1944), a Catholic journalist based in Munich. These challenging documents were the starting-point for the *katholischer Literaturstreit*, a public dispute that lingered until the protagonists, including Kralik and Muth, united in support of the Austro-German cause in 1914.<sup>27</sup> They had initially tried to work together. With the foundation of *Hochland* in 1903, Muth gave Catholics a much-needed cultural journal. Kralik contributed to the early numbers but liked neither Muth's tolerant ecumenism, which very nearly won *Hochland* a place on the Roman Catholic Index of Prohibited Books, nor the small amount of space allowed to him. Both Kralik and Muth were charismatic men, and each gathered a band of loyal supporters around him. Following the split in the Leo-Gesellschaft, Kralik had become the leader of the conservative faction which found considerable support in Vienna. In 1904 this group established the *Gralbund* and two years later set up *Der Gral* as the platform for their views. Despite claims to the contrary, the two journals competed for readers and for the cultural high ground. The idealism proclaimed by the motto

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<sup>26</sup> Kralik, 'Über die gegenwärtige Stellung der katholischen Literatur', *Die Kultur*, 1 (1899–1900), 336–40 (p. 338); reproduced in Kralik, *Kulturstudien* (Münster i.W.: Verlag der Alphonsus-Buchhandlung, 1900), pp. 45–51 (p. 48).

<sup>27</sup> For a detailed account see Ernst Hanisch, 'Der katholische Literaturstreit', in *Der Modernismus: Beiträge zu seiner Erforschung*, ed. by Erika Weinzierl (Graz, Vienna and Cologne: Verlag Styria, 1974), pp. 125–60; useful information on the Catholic literary scene is also given in the following: Bernhard Doppler, *Katholische Literatur und Literaturpolitik: Enrica von Handel-Mazzetti: Eine Fallstudie*, *Literatur in der Geschichte, Geschichte in der Literatur*, 4 (Königstein/Ts.: Hain, 1980), pp. 1–32; Wolfgang Frühwald, 'Katholische Literatur im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert', in *Religiös-kulturelle Bewegungen im deutschen Katholizismus seit 1800*, ed. by Anton Rauscher (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1986), pp. 9–26.

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‘Hochland — hohen Geistes Land, / Sinn, dem Höchsten zugewandt!’ was followed by the equally emphatic ‘Grafahrt — Höhenfahrt!’<sup>28</sup>

It is very possible that, in taking up the cudgels specifically against Muth rather than against Austrian liberals (such as the editors of the Salzburg journal *Über den Wassern*), Kralik hoped to manipulate public opinion in Austria.<sup>29</sup> He set up a clear opposition between Austrian and German in the expectation that national loyalty would bring the majority of Austrian Catholics onto his side, thus giving the divided Church there a renewed sense of cohesion. If so, the plan misfired because Kralik overrated both his personal charisma and his literary achievement. Instead the *katholischer Literaturstreit* became an embarrassment. Catholics felt the emotional appeal but resisted it. Friedrich Funder, editor of the *Reichspost*, is typical when he admits somewhat sheepishly: ‘Wir Jungen kümmerten uns nicht sonderlich um den Literaturstreit, der die Köpfe der Alten erhitzte und in dem wir mit unseren Herzen mehr bei Karl Muth als bei den Unseren waren.’<sup>30</sup>

The cultural identity of Catholics was at stake in this dispute: should it remain distinct, even at the price of being consigned to a literary ghetto, or should it aim to improve its standing by assimilating to the heritage of mainstream culture, even if it lost its distinct character in the process? That opinions diverged so radically was partly due to the different situation of Catholics in Germany and in Austria, and partly to differences in what constituted mainstream culture. Catholics in the German Reich made up approximately one third of the total population and were concentrated in the Rhineland, Westphalia and Bavaria. During the *Kulturkampf* Bismarck had deliberately marginalized them by equating ultramontanism with a lack of national loyalty and supporting the established view that Protestantism should be part of the North German identity. Consequently, their only hope for integration was to establish a positive basis in existing national culture, so far as that was compatible with faith. What that meant in practice was *Heimatkunst* and Weimar classicism. Muth’s foreword to *Hochland* stressed that

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<sup>28</sup> The programmes of both journals are set out in their opening numbers: Karl Muth, ‘Ein Vorwort zu “Hochland”’, *Hochland*, 1, i (1903–04), 1–8 (p. 2); Franz Eichert, ‘Grafahrt — Höhenfahrt!’, *Der Graf*, 1 (1906), 1–7.

<sup>29</sup> On this journal and Ignaz Seipel’s involvement in the *Literaturstreit*, see Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel: Christian Statesman in a Time of Crisis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 43–49.

<sup>30</sup> Friedrich Funder, *Vom Gestern ins Heute: Aus dem Kaiserreich in die Republik* (Vienna: Herold, 1953), p. 347.

'Tendenzliteratur' had to give way to a more broadly based idealism that would be acceptable to larger sectors of the population: 'wir wollen eine Auffassung von Leben, Kunst und Kultur, welche in allem Zeitlichen und Wirklichen den Abglanz des Ewigen und einer höheren Wirklichkeit erblickt.'<sup>31</sup> In Austria, by contrast, the majority was at least nominally Catholic, so that the activists could justifiably feel that they had a good many potential supporters, if only they could overcome the apathy of the prosperous middle classes and the alienation of the urban proletariat. For this reason, Austrian Catholics felt far less obliged to make concessions than their north German neighbours.

There are also significant differences between Austria and Germany in terms of dramatic traditions. Since Austria had no equivalent to the *Sturm und Drang* movement, Weimar classicism, which followed and to some extent reacted against it, also made less impact. This, together with the strength of the Counter-Reformation in Austria and the fact that the Habsburg monarchy retained a substantial connection with the Catholic Baroque tradition, allowed Josef Nadler and others to claim that that tradition continued unbroken into the twentieth century. It is, however, a gross simplification to attribute the dispute between Kralik and Muth purely to differences in cultural geography and to ignore both their personal interests and the unique position of Catholics in Bavaria, which was where Muth made his home.<sup>32</sup> According to Nadler, the Baroque also dominated there; but Bavaria had joined the German Reich in 1871 and, although in the majority demographically and well represented politically, Bavarian Catholics had to contend with a royal bureaucracy which had long favoured the Protestant minority, did its utmost to restrict the power of the Bavarian Centre Party, and in its educational and cultural policy sponsored a secular classicism which overlaid what remained of the Baroque heritage with an enlightened rationalism.<sup>33</sup> Hence, it was all the more necessary that Bavarian Catholics should exploit the ambiguous cultural and

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<sup>31</sup> Muth, 'Ein Vorwort zu "Hochland"', pp. 6, 4.

<sup>32</sup> Josef Nadler attempts an assessment of the *Literaturstreit* based on cultural geography in 'Hochlandkämpfe von gestern und morgen', in *Wiederbegegnung von Kirche und Kultur in Deutschland: Eine Gabe für Karl Muth* (Munich: Kösel & Pustet, 1927), pp. 59–70. Nadler's argument relies on considering Muth as a Rhinelander rather than a Bavarian and ignoring his interest in drama.

<sup>33</sup> See Peter Jelavich, *Munich and Theatrical Modernism; Politics, Playwriting, and Performance 1890–1914* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 12–26.

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political implications of Weimar classicism by arguing that the idealism of that period arose 'aus dem Muttergrund des Religiösen'.<sup>34</sup>

Although it was Muth's dissatisfaction with the state of the Catholic novel which triggered the *katholischer Literaturstreit*, and although his foreword to *Hochland* makes only passing reference to 'die so wichtige Frage einer Theaterreform vom Standpunkt unseres Programms', his experiences as a journalist in the early 1890s and his reading of Schiller's essays on the theatre had given him definite views on the question of reform.<sup>35</sup> It is interesting to examine these in more detail, since they form a critical commentary on Kralik's cultural vision.

Muth made his first foray into literary journalism in 1889 with a brochure publicizing and setting out a programme for the festival theatre about to be opened in his home town of Worms. He was strongly critical of run-of-the-mill commercial theatre which he thought was no longer able to make an impact on the audience as individuals, or to foster a sense of community. Typically, for a young man of his generation, he wrote of Wagner's achievements as a step in the right direction; he also stressed the need for festival theatre to treat national subjects and suggested that, as a 'Volksbühne', the Worms theatre would benefit from involving both amateur and professional performers. It is clear from Muth's review of the opening gala performance that the play commissioned, *Drei Jahrhunderte am Rhein* by Hans Herrig, sought to impress upon the local people that this was their town and their theatre. Contact between stage and auditorium was established by means of an anti-illusionistic prologue in which a figure designated 'Der Fremde' strode through the auditorium, Baedeker in hand, and announced when he reached the forestage:

Das Lied verklingt. Ich bin am Ort,  
Zuschauer hier, die Bühne dort;  
Hab' mancherlei davon gelesen,  
Doch bin ich nicht überzeugt gewesen.  
Volksbühne wird das Ding genannt.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Muth, 'Ein Vorwort zu "Hochland"', p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 7. On Muth's literary journalism see Anton Wilhelm Hüffer, *Karl Muth als Literaturkritiker* (Münster i.W.: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1959).

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in Karl Muth, 'Zur Wormser Theaterreform: Ein Bericht über die Eröffnungsfeier des Spiel- und Festhauses zu Worms', *Die Gesellschaft*, 6 (1890), 115–20 (p. 117).

The tourist attraction is not just the theatre but its audience too. Predictably, there followed a series of scenes depicting highpoints in the history of Worms.

The festival theatre in Worms was something of a curiosity in its time. Interestingly, Ehrenfels thought that it might be suitable to stage his *Der Kampf des Prometheus*, mainly because it had an organ at the back of the auditorium and room for a choir in the gallery above it. Muth noted that the organ was used to create a churchlike atmosphere at the start of the inaugural performance, but did not mention the possibility of using festival theatre as a focus of religious consciousness. In the same situation, Kralik would have written at length about the need to treat Catholic subjects and to revive mystery plays. The reasons for these omissions bring one to the heart of Muth's aesthetics and to the most salient differences between Muth and Kralik.

Muth abhorred tendentiousness in general and Catholic tendentiousness in particular. This, above all else, had consigned Catholic literature to the ghetto; by emphasizing content at the expense of form and style, writers had allowed literary standards to fall so far that no modern Catholic writing was likely to stand the test of time. For Muth, such art forms as Greek drama could be deemed religious because they embodied the eternal values of beauty and truth. These values were most likely to be distorted in literature if the author wrote as the spokesman for a particular party or idea. As early as 1890 Muth urged: 'Der Dichter stehe in keiner Partei, sein Standpunkt sei ein geozentrischer! Und wo ererbte Vorurteile seinen Blick umdüstern, die Wahrheit zu entstellen drohen, da suche er ohne Vorurteil und mit williger Hinnahme nach dem Rechten an der Quelle.'<sup>37</sup> This quest for absolute and objective truth, the source of which is with God, contrasts sharply with Kralik who, during the *Literaturstreit*, paraded his partiality and, as a student, had been impressed by Treitschke's unashamedly biased lecturing style. In 1876 he told his friend Bettelheim: 'Ich glaube sogar, dass aus einer angreifenden und vertheidigenden Parteischilderung ein lebensvolleres und wahreres Bild zu schöpfen ist, als aus der gesinnungslosen Indifferenz eines Wissenschaftlichen; wie man ja auch die Mondgebirge bei der schiefsten Beleuchtung am klarsten sehen und am richtigsten messen kann.'<sup>38</sup>

Again in contrast to Kralik, Muth was extremely sceptical about the value of reviving traditional forms of Catholic drama. As the correspondent of the

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<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Hüffer, *Karl Muth als Literaturkritiker*, p. 23 (note 36).

<sup>38</sup> Kralik, letter to Anton Bettelheim, 28 October 1876, I.N. 180.935, p. 4.

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*Mainzer Journal* he attended the Oberammergau passion play in 1890. Although impressed, he concluded that it was too great an anachronism in the modern world to be the starting-point for a widespread revival. This contrasted sharply with the integralist view: 'Das Passionsspiel in Oberammergau ist zum Typus des katholischen Schauspielgedankens geworden, es hat die gewaltige Idee zu vertreten, daß solche Festspiele die Grundlage zur Regenerierung, zur Erneuerung des Bühnenwesens werden müssen und können.'<sup>39</sup> For Muth, Oberammergau was a sport rather than a type, a strange anomaly in a world which evolved 'nach ewig rollenden Gesetzen'.<sup>40</sup> Ideas of this kind were anathema to Kralik. At the height of the *Literaturstreit* he wrote:

Er [Muth] hält es für möglich, einen modernen Stil, eine moderne Form, die als Gestaltung des eigentümlichen modernen Gehaltes sich notwendig ausgebildet hat, auf einen anderen Gehalt zu übertragen. Ich habe schon wiederholt darauf hingewiesen, daß dies ein ästhetisches [*sic*] Unding ist. Form und Stoff sind korrele Begriffe. Ein Löwe kann nur eine Löwenhaut, und ein Esel nur eine Eselhaut haben. Der Wolf im Schafspelz ist ein Betrüger, und das Schaf im Wolfspelz ein — Schaf. Der Stil ist nach einem guten Wahrwort der Mann, der Stil ist der Charakter, ist der Geist, ist die Idee, die Sache selber in ihrem adäquaten Ausdruck. Das gilt von Prosa und Poesie, vom Roman und vom Epos, von alter und von neuer Dichtung, von katholischer wie nichtkatholischer Literatur.<sup>41</sup>

If one accepts that there is an organic relationship between form and content, then the point is valid, but this does not rule out the creation of new Catholic forms of literature which would reflect the changing character of faith in the modern world. For Kralik, however, dramatic forms had no need to evolve because faith was static. He followed the Romantics and Richard Wagner in taking up medieval and Baroque forms of drama, not out of historical or aesthetic interest but because these were the forms which had arisen at times of widespread piety and had proven most suited to conveying a traditional Christian message.

Munich, Muth's adopted home, was one of several cities besides Vienna in which groups and individuals on the (often Catholic) right wing attempted to change the cultural climate. Georg Fuchs, an impresario whose cultural politics bear some resemblance to Kralik's, spent a turbulent period as director

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<sup>39</sup> Josef Neumair, 'Oberammergau', *Der Gral*, 5 (1910–11), 88–95, 163–72, 231–40, 283–94 (p. 164).

<sup>40</sup> Karl Muth, 'Das Passionsspiel in Oberammergau: Dramaturgische Betrachtungen', *Mainzer Journal*, 21 July 1890; quoted in Hüffer, *Karl Muth als Literaturkritiker*, p. 24.

<sup>41</sup> Kralik, *Die katholische Literaturbewegung der Gegenwart*, p. 36.

of the city's Künstlertheater from 1907 to 1909, and Calderón Societies were set up in both Munich (1906) and Berlin (1910).<sup>42</sup> Muth's response to the founding of the Munich Calderón Society is interesting because it further calls into question Kralik's precepts.

Muth welcomes this new Catholic organization, whose first venture was a production of Calderón's *Der wundertätige Magus* (*El mágico prodigioso*), and faithfully records its objectives:

Da die 'Berufsbühnen' die 'religiöse, d. h. im Dienste des Glaubens stehende Bühnenkunst auf allgemein christlicher Grundlage' zu sehr vernachlässigten, soll hier eine gewisse Ergänzung angestrebt und zugleich die Sache an sich gefördert werden durch Veranstaltung von Aufführungen religiöser oder doch von christlichem Gehalte erfüllter Bühnenstücke, durch Heranbildung von Kräften hierzu, sowie durch Vorträge über Bühnenkunst, über ihre Stellung zur Religion und über christliche Dramatiker, schließlich durch Herausgabe eines Vereinsorgans.<sup>43</sup>

Although seeing that the venture is inspired by a dissatisfaction with the professional stage akin to his own, Muth immediately dismisses any naive hopes of amateur drama supplanting it and doubts whether the Society's efforts will even complement the professional establishments to any significant extent. In his view, such an organization either needs an artistic personality of the calibre of Shakespeare, Calderón, Molière or Wagner at its head to provide strong leadership and ensure a good literary standard or, alternatively, it needs sufficient financial resources to buy in such talent. Since the Munich Calderón Society is blessed with neither, it is condemned, like the Leo-Gesellschaft, to be elitist and limited in impact.<sup>44</sup>

Although Muth does not predict a glorious future for the Calderón Society, he does think that it has a role to play. He notes with approval that a broad range of activities is planned, including lectures and discussion evenings, and expresses the hope that these will not be abandoned in favour of merely staging Calderón's works. Unlike Kralik, Muth is not convinced that Calderón can necessarily speak to a modern audience. He writes:

<sup>42</sup> On Fuchs see Jelavich, *Munich and Theatrical Modernism*, pp. 187–208.

<sup>43</sup> –th [Karl Muth], 'Christliche Bühnenkunst', *Hochland*, 4, ii (1906–07), 629–31 (p. 629).

<sup>44</sup> Sullivan shows from membership lists that the Munich Calderón Society, like the Austrian Leo-Gesellschaft, was socially elite, but has little information on its activities or its reception in Catholic circles. Sullivan, *Calderón in the German Lands and in the Low Countries*, pp. 336–40.

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Calderon, den man vollständig doch nur mit gewissen Konzessionen an den Charakter seiner Zeit und Nationalität genießen kann, wird man nicht einseitig als Vorbild hinstellen dürfen. Ich wenigstens glaube nicht, daß unser deutsches Volk, auch nicht die christlichen Kreise, soweit bei ihnen literarhistorische Interessen in Wegfall kommen, sich von den meisten der Calderonischen Stücke auch nur angesprochen, geschweige denn begeistert fühlen werden. Es stehen sich hier trotz des religiösen Bindeglieds zwei in Sitte und Seelenstimmung zu verschiedene Welten gegenüber.<sup>45</sup>

In his view, the more pressing need is to provide an aesthetic education for the large sectors of the Catholic population which still have 'kein inneres, lebendiges, tiefer greifendes und warmes Verhältnis weder zur schönen Literatur noch zum Theater'.<sup>46</sup> The type of education he has in mind cannot be realized merely by driving masses of good Catholics into the theatre. What the Catholic public needs to learn is discernment; there are still works in the professional repertoire which can be recommended without reservation, and Calderón productions only become valuable once audiences are able to perceive not only the similarities but also the difference between his world and their own.

Muth's idea of rationally educating people for the theatre suggests that his mature views owe a far greater debt to Schiller's essay 'Was kann eine gute stehende Schaubühne eigentlich wirken?' than to Wagner's cultural ideology. For Muth, what mattered most was the attitude with which people came into the theatre; reform had to take place at a popular level but could not rely exclusively on the irrational power of cultic experience. The two vital ingredients were a receptive audience and a great writer: by the latter Muth meant one who was capable of producing works of the highest literary standard and thereby of putting his stamp on the theatre of his day. In other words, Catholic drama needed a second Calderón to bring it out of the doldrums; and Muth hoped that, in the meantime, Catholic cultural organizations would prepare for his coming. The more imminent arrival was, however, a rather different brand of popular theatre: Max Reinhardt's arena productions and, in particular, Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann*, staged in Munich in 1912. In liberal Catholics such as Muth they found an impatience with works which were felt to be trivial or offensive, but a respect for genuine art.

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<sup>45</sup> Muth, 'Christliche Bühnenkunst', pp. 630–31.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 630.

*Greek Drama and Arena Theatre on the Professional Stage*

The revival of Greek drama and arena theatre brought about by Hofmannsthal and Reinhardt in the years leading up to the First World War was a parallel development to the *Literaturstreit* and to the growth of the Catholic *Vereinsbühnen* but cannot be described as a deliberate programme. Hofmannsthal's *Elektra* (1903), the work with which it began, was markedly influenced by Freudian psychology and therefore an extremely unlikely prelude to his later interest in cultic drama; but it brought Hofmannsthal into professional contact with Reinhardt, with the result that later Greek adaptations conformed far more closely to the latter's idea of Greek drama as cultic spectacle to be brought before a mass audience. *Jedermann* will be considered in this chapter both as an extension of the creative interest in *Welttheater* which had established itself with *Der Tor und der Tod*, and also in the light of Reinhardt's other ventures into arena theatre, particularly his production of Vollmoeller's *Das Mirakel* (1911), which used a Catholic legend as the basis for a lavish theatrical spectacle and provoked polemical responses from some quarters. With the Berlin premiere of *Jedermann* Hofmannsthal glimpsed the social and ethical value of festival performance and achieved a modernization of the English morality play which was acceptable to many liberal-minded believers.

Just as Kralik spent the 1890s searching for a style of his own, so eclecticism was a marked characteristic both of Hofmannsthal's endeavours to establish himself as a dramatist writing for the contemporary stage and of Reinhardt's efforts to find a setting and a style of production appropriate to dramatic works belonging to the most diverse traditions and movements. Hofmannsthal, whom Kraus sarcastically called 'diesen Edelsteinsammler aller Literaturen',<sup>47</sup> began a verse adaptation of Calderón's *La vida es sueño* in 1902, but soon abandoned it to work on Thomas Ottway's *Venice Preserv'd*. He produced a first draft in 1903 but the second had to wait until after the completion of *Elektra*; plans to rework Euripides' *Bacchae* were then dropped in favour of an Oedipus trilogy, two parts of which appeared in quick succession before he produced the final version of *Jedermann*. By grappling with these large-scale dramatic forms, Hofmannsthal hoped to overcome the

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<sup>47</sup> Karl Kraus, 'Die Einacter', *Die Fackel*, 1 (April 1899), 24–27 (p. 25).

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lyrical character of his earlier works, to accustom himself to the demands of 'die wirklich brutale Bühne'.<sup>48</sup>

Reinhardt began his directorial career in Berlin in 1902. From 1903 onwards he had at his disposal both a large auditorium and a more intimate studio theatre. Concerned above all to bring the action close to the spectators, he experimented feverishly, playing small-scale, symbolist and later expressionist works (including Ibsen, Tolstoy, Gorky, Maeterlinck, Strindberg and Wedekind) in the smaller house and everything from Shakespeare and Schiller to Shaw and Nestroy in the larger one.<sup>49</sup> Although Reinhardt was supposedly reluctant to tackle Greek drama because he felt that the established translations and adaptations were too 'gipsern' to capture the imagination of a modern audience, he staged Hofmannsthal's translation of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* as his first arena production in 1910.<sup>50</sup> With this he, and indeed Hofmannsthal, began to realize the powerful impression of immediacy and involvement which could be created in less conventional auditoria.

Hofmannsthal had been aware for some time of the difficulties of staging Greek drama, thematizing them in his 'Vorspiel zur Antigone von Sophokles' (1900). There a student who has stayed behind after a rehearsal of the play is confronted by a ghostly apparition in a tragic mask. Drawing on many familiar Hofmannsthal notions, such as the idea that all is flux, that one always sees a mask rather than a face, and that human life is merely a reflection of another, more permanent sphere of existence, the phantom undermines the student's faith in the security of the modern world, thereby making him more receptive to the 'other' world of the drama. However, in order to complete the transition from detached aesthetic interest to unreserved emotional involvement, it takes a spot of magic: the phantom, reminiscent of Sorge in Goethe's *Faust*, breathes on the student's eyes, forcing him to experience the tragic intensity of the Greek world.

In Hofmannsthal's view there were two reasons why a touch of magic was needed to break down the barriers between audience and text. Firstly, Greek literature was so commonly a subject of academic study that it was unlikely to make an emotional impact without translator and director finding an unfamiliar

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<sup>48</sup> Hugo von Hofmannsthal – Arthur Schnitzler, *Briefwechsel*, ed. by Therese Nickl and Heinrich Schnitzler (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1964), p. 23: Hofmannsthal to Schnitzler, 19 July 1892.

<sup>49</sup> A sympathetic account of Reinhardt's career, including chronology and list of productions, is given in J.L. Styan, *Max Reinhardt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); his claim that 'Reinhardt's was a bloodless revolution' (p. 16) is, however, questionable.

<sup>50</sup> Hofmannsthal, *Briefe 1890–1909*, II, 384, note 95.

approach to it; and secondly, the humanistic image of Greek culture propagated by Weimar classicism, and especially by Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, had robbed it of its original intensity. According to Hofmannsthal, the spectator experienced Iphigenie's destiny 'nur gleichnishaft' (RA3 443). His *Elektra* was intended as a definite contrast:

Als Stil schwebte mir vor, etwas Gegensätzliches zur 'Iphigenie' zu machen, etwas worauf das Wort nicht passe: 'dieses gräcisierende Produkt erschien mir beim erneuten Lesen verteuftelt human' (Goethe an Schiller). (RA3 452)

Hofmannsthal's intention was not to dodge tragedy but to bring it closer to a modern audience by re-interpreting the classical material with the brutal directness of a Freudian case study: 'Wir müssen uns den Schauer des Mythos *neu* schaffen' (RA3 443: italics in original). Whereas Sophocles achieved that shudder by bringing noble individuals into conflict with the gods, Hofmannsthal brought hysterical, tormented figures into contact with their own innermost desires. Metaphysical forces played little part in motivating the action, as *Welttheater* gave way to the theatre of the mind: 'Zu denken, daß alle Himmel und Unterwelten aller Religionen aus dem menschlichen Innern erbaut sind: auf der Kraft der Projektion nach außen kommt alles an' (RA3 259). Since in Hofmannsthal's play neither Elektra nor her brother has a clear image of the gods, she can only be lamenting her own failure to give Orest the axe when she cries, 'Es sind keine / Götter im Himmel!' (D2 229). As Worbs has pointed out, Hofmannsthal's Greek adaptations lose the sense that there is an external destiny hanging over individuals; instead, such elements as the prophecy of the Delphic oracle and the Tantalid curse are revealed as 'Projektionen des Unbewußten in den Götterhimmel'.<sup>51</sup>

*Elektra* is anything but a festival drama. Hofmannsthal's dark, claustrophobic play had its premiere at the Kammerspiele in Berlin, a tiny auditorium which held only three hundred. Surrounded by rich panelling in what Hofmannsthal thought of as a 'Nußschale' (RA3 443), the audience sat only yards from a performance space designed to convey the symbolic intensity of a dream world. Insofar as it presents 'eine düstere prägriechische Welt, in der man Griechenland kaum wiedererkennen wollte' (RA2 30), one might see *Elektra* as a development akin to Hofmannsthal's destruction of the myth of childhood innocence, discussed in Chapter Two. As in 'Age of Innocence' he

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<sup>51</sup> Worbs, *Nervenkunst*, p. 328.

creates 'eine neue, durchaus persönliche Dichtung' (D3 104) which discovers pathological fixations in places where many people thought it was sacrilegious to look for them.

Although *Elektra* was a success with audiences (both as spoken drama and as opera), critical responses varied widely and several commentators indeed felt that it was a desecration of Europe's cultural heritage.<sup>52</sup> Kralik resembles Hofmannsthal when he complains of 'die Nebel des Zweifels, des Unglaubens, des alles einhüllenden falschen Humanismus' in Goethe's *Iphigenie*,<sup>53</sup> but he, like many Catholics, heartily loathed Freud and regretted the prevalence of eroticism in modern literature. He could not therefore give Hofmannsthal's *Elektra* his blessing and wrote: 'Es war die Rache der Dekadenz an die Kultur; der griechische Heroentempel wurde zur Verbrecherhöhle und zum Irrenhaus.'<sup>54</sup> Since Kralik viewed Greek drama as a forerunner of the Christian mystery play and was concerned primarily with its pedagogic and religious aspects, he proposed to bring it up to date by substituting Christian saints for the classical heroes: 'Wir müßten vielmehr von den Griechen lernen, deutsch zu sein, und wir müßten von ihnen als Polytheisten lernen, katholisch zu sein.'<sup>55</sup> Schnitzler, by contrast, admired 'die ihrer Hoheit entkleidete Griechin' but also suggested how such iconoclasm was generally viewed: 'Aus dem alten Sophokles ein Zugstück zu machen! Echt jüdisch.'<sup>56</sup>

Hofmannsthal's next Greek adaptation, *Ödipus und die Sphinx* (1905), also owes a debt to Freudian psychology (this time to *Die Traumdeutung* rather than the *Studien über Hysterie*) but differs from *Elektra* in two important respects. Firstly, it has crowd scenes in the second and third acts which demand the sort of staging at which Reinhardt excelled. Secondly, although the gods play no part in the drama and the oracle only shows Ödipus his own dreams, a sense of biological determinism is contained in the idea of 'der Strom des Bluts' (W8 24): Ödipus offers little resistance to his fate because he feels that the quasi-

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<sup>52</sup> See Wolfgang Nehring, "Elektra" und "Ödipus" — Hofmannsthals "Erneuerung der Antike" für das Theater Max Reinhardts', in *Hugo von Hofmannsthal: Freundschaften und Begegnungen mit deutschen Zeitgenossen*, ed. by Ursula Renner and G. Bärbel Schmid (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1991), pp. 123–42; on *Elektra* see also W.E. Yates, *Schnitzler, Hofmannsthal, and the Austrian Theatre* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), pp. 137–48.

<sup>53</sup> Kralik, *Die katholische Literaturbewegung der Gegenwart*, p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> Kralik, *Die Weltliteratur der Gegenwart*, p. 294.

<sup>55</sup> Kralik, *Die Weltliteratur im Lichte der Weltkirche* (Vienna, Innsbruck and Munich: Verlagsanstalt Tyrolia, 1918), p. 51.

<sup>56</sup> Hofmannsthal – Schnitzler, *Briefwechsel*, p. 176: Schnitzler to Hofmannsthal, 4 November 1903.

metaphysical order of the world lies in an inescapable phylogenetic inheritance. Hofmannsthal had long been interested in ideas of this kind. As early as 1895 he noted: 'Biologisch — auch im Geistigen ist die Entwicklung des Individuums eine abgekürzte Wiederholung der Entwicklungsgeschichte seiner Ahnenreihe (RA3 400). A variation on the idea also appears in the fragmentary prose *Jedermann*, the composition of which overlaps with the last stages of work on *Ödipus und die Sphinx*. In the scene between Jedermann and Verwandtschaft it is, however, treated in a far more conflictual manner. Appearing, like a reclusive maiden aunt, for births, weddings and funerals, Verwandtschaft asserts: 'Es kommt alles wieder, nur ein bisschen anders zusammengemischt' (W9 20). Whereas Ödipus might have accepted this, the now ironically named Jedermann resents her insistence on repetition and kinship as an invidious attack on his unique personality. Just as Claudio disputed the authority of Death in *Der Tor und der Tod*, Jedermann presumes to hope that Verwandtschaft will learn 'dass ein Mensch, ein Mensch ist, ein einzig Wesen das nicht wiederkommt, niemals, hörst du mich niemals, niemals, niemals!' (W9 21). This strident individualism, defying the limitations of a deterministic world theatre, makes clear the extent to which Greek drama represents 'another world' for Hofmannsthal, one in which Faustian aspiration has made no impact. Later to note 'Bedenklich Determinismus' alongside 'Freudianismus' (RA3 150), Hofmannsthal cannot accept it within the context of Christian myth.

Having made a concession to Reinhardt's taste for *Massenregie* in *Ödipus und die Sphinx*, Hofmannsthal also supplied the text for his first full-scale arena production, a new translation of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, which was premiered in Munich in 1910 and subsequently established Reinhardt's reputation throughout Europe. It is important to make clear at this point that Reinhardt's interest in Greek drama was inseparable from his desire to experiment with the arena stage. This had several attractions, the most obvious being the sheer size of acting space and auditorium in such buildings as circus arenas and exhibition halls. These favoured symbolic staging techniques, with particular emphasis on lighting; theatrical effects had to be large scale, just to be noticed, and relied heavily on non-verbal means. Furthermore, the banked seating was more egalitarian than a conventional *Rangtheater* and created a more authentic atmosphere for festival theatre; the audience was effectively invited to imagine that they were Greek citizens or fifteenth-century Catholics, and the awareness

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of being in a crowd of several thousand was intended to encourage intense emotional responses.

Reinhardt's dislike of politics was to become widely known, and his arena productions were certainly not intended to serve an ideological purpose. For Reinhardt, communal responses were exciting while they lasted, but had no power to change hearts and minds; when the applause died away, so did the unifying *Rausch*. Many who had been schooled in the Schillerian idea that the theatre was a place of moral education considered it an insult to human dignity to arouse emotions in an audience without putting them to good use. However, Reinhardt believed that the theatre created a world of make-believe which allowed audiences to escape briefly from the anxiety and tedium of everyday concerns and rediscover the joy of imaginative play. In other words, his theatre was based on an ethically neutral notion of *Spiel*, the origins of which were located in childhood. Reinhardt made few theoretical pronouncements, but set this out clearly in his 'Rede über den Schauspieler' (1930):

In den Kindern spiegelt sich das Wesen des Schauspielers am reinsten wider. Ihre Aufnahmefähigkeit ist beispiellos, und der Drang zu gestalten, der sich in ihren Spielen kundgibt, ist unbezähmbar und wahrhaft schöpferisch. Sie wollen die Welt noch einmal selbst entdecken, selbst erschaffen. [...] Sie verwandeln sich blitzschnell in alles, was sie sehen, und verwandeln alles in das, was sie wünschen. Ihre Einbildungskraft ist zwingend. Das Sofa hier? Eisenbahn: schon knattert, zischt und pfeift die Lokomotive, schon sieht jemand beglückt durch das Coupéfenster die zauberhaftesten Landschaften vorbeifliegen, schon kontrolliert ein strenger Beamter die Fahrkarten, und schon ist man am Ziel [...].<sup>57</sup>

For Reinhardt the theatre was therefore 'der seligste Schlupfwinkel für diejenigen, die ihre Kindheit heimlich in die Tasche gesteckt und sich damit auf und davon gemacht haben, um bis an ihr Lebensende weiterzuspielen'.<sup>58</sup> Rather than serving something above or beyond itself, the act of performance became a celebration of man's capacity for imaginative role-play. This belief in theatre for its own sake was reflected in Reinhardt's love of festival dramas and ones with a conscious play element, such as Molière's *comédies-ballets*,

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<sup>57</sup> Max Reinhardt, 'Rede über den Schauspieler', in Reinhardt, *Schriften: Briefe, Reden, Interviews, Gespräche, Auszüge aus Regiebüchern*, ed. by Hugo Fetting (Berlin: Henschelverlag Kunst und Gesellschaft, 1974), pp. 324–27 (p. 326). The train anecdote also appears in 'Von der modernen Schauspielkunst und der Arbeit des Regisseurs mit dem Schauspieler' (1915), *ibid.*, pp. 304–14 (p. 308).

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 327.

Shakespeare's comedies and Wedekind's festival of youth, *Frühlings Erwachen*.

What made Reinhardt's productions so phenomenally successful but also so open to criticism was that, without claiming any more profound objectives than this, he still sought an intense response from his audience. Every production was intended to generate a total theatrical experience that would beguile and engross. Viewed uncharitably, the result was *Ausstattungstheater* which left the spectator with nothing more profound than a vivid impression of actors and actresses in constant motion; costumes were elaborate and stage-sets exploited the latest innovations in lighting and design; crowd scenes offered a level of excitement never before encountered in the German theatre; and the spoken word was supplemented with music, dance and mime wherever possible. As Reinhardt's emergence coincided with the heyday of the big top circus, and as he frequently borrowed its buildings, 'Zirkus' became a popular term of abuse for professional theatre in general and his theatre in particular. Like the jugglers, tightrope walkers and performing beasts in the sawdust ring, it was seen as pandering to sensationalism and escapism.

The chorus of disapproval was loudest when Reinhardt turned from Greek to Christian myth. The production which gave his critics most ammunition was Karl Vollmoeller's wordless mystery play *Das Mirakel*, which had its premiere at London's Kensington Olympia on 23 December 1911, three weeks after the Berlin premiere of Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann*. Complete with music by Engelbert Humperdinck, *Das Mirakel* proved to be an enormous box-office success everywhere it went; but its exploitation of the Catholic cultural tradition provoked criticism of a kind which is also very relevant to *Jedermann* and must have affected opinions of that work.

Based on a medieval legend which had already been reworked by Keller and by Maeterlinck, Vollmoeller's *Mirakel* is the tale of the nun, Sister Megildis, who is suddenly gripped by the desire to experience worldly pleasures and runs away from her convent. By introducing the decorative feature of a violin-playing minstrel, reminiscent of Death in Hofmannsthal's *Der Tor und der Tod*, Vollmoeller made it, in the words of one critic, 'katholische Frömmigkeit multipliziert mit andersgläubigem Raffinement'.<sup>59</sup> The playing of this Dionysian but satanic figure awakens the nun's suppressed longings and she is drawn to dance under the gaze of a handsome knight. The intermezzo which

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<sup>59</sup> Alfred Polgar, 'Das Mirakel', *Die Schaubühne*, 8 (1912), 311–14 (p. 311).

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follows this first act is presented as a dream sequence with strong Freudian overtones. The nun, now out in the world, brings a series of men to their doom before the *Mirakel* reaches its theatrical highpoint, an elaborate court masquerade which, unlike that of *Faust*, kills its participants. The nun, now responsible for even more deaths, is tried as a witch but escapes, ultimately becoming a soldiers' whore with a child. The intermezzo ends with a *Totentanz* in which the minstrel, playing the haunting melody of death which Humperdinck wove through the whole score, leads a shadowy procession of the woman's dead lovers and invites her to join. The second act returns to the convent where, in an act of divine grace, the statue of the Madonna has taken over the nun's duties during her absence, thus allowing the repentant nun to return without anyone knowing of her adventures. She gives her now dead child to the Madonna, thus enabling the statue's strange disappearance to be followed by its miraculous reappearance.<sup>60</sup> This 'miracle', at which nuns and laity rejoice, is, however, part of the nun's dream, 'wodurch der ganze Hergang aus dem Dichterischen in die psychopathia sexualis einer bedürftigen Nonne gerückt wird'.<sup>61</sup> As in Hofmannsthal's Greek adaptations, metaphysics can be explained away by psychoanalysis, thereby depriving the legend of its spiritual core.

Reinhardt used Vollmoeller's epic framework as an excuse to create an immense pageant of medieval life. In the continental premiere of *Das Mirakel*, at the Vienna Rotunde, an audience of nine thousand was treated to Reinhardt-style *Welttheater* at its most monumental. The production supposedly found work for two thousand people, including two hundred and fifty musicians and eight assistant directors.<sup>62</sup> Reviewers repeatedly stressed that the literary value of the play was minimal and that Reinhardt was essentially doing nothing new: he was merely doing it on a larger scale than ever before. The banquet scene is the theatrical *raison d'être* of *Jedermann*: in the light of *Das Mirakel*, one might be disinclined to believe that there was any more to it.

Somewhat surprisingly, the Viennese premiere of *Das Mirakel*, on 17 September 1912, was arranged to coincide with the twenty-third International Eucharistic Congress, competing not only with Jules Massenet's opera *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame* (*Der Gaukler unserer lieben Frau*) but also with the

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<sup>60</sup> A summary of the plot is given in the programme of the London production, a copy of which is held in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach a.N.

<sup>61</sup> Richard Specht, 'Das Mirakel', *Der Merker*, 3 (1912), 726–30 (p. 728).

<sup>62</sup> Polgar, 'Das Mirakel', p. 311.

Berlin Calderón Society, who visited Vienna at this time, performing Kralik's adaptation of *Die Geheimnisse der Messe*. Although Hans Brečka, cultural editor of the *Reichspost*, saw nothing in *Das Mirakel* to offend Catholic sensibilities and even wrote 'es ist ihm [Reinhardt] gelungen, uns für Augenblicke in tiefste Ergriffenheit und in eine schier bezauberte Stimmung zu verreißen', the fact that a Jewish theatre director was exploiting the Catholic heritage for commercial gain outraged many Catholics;<sup>63</sup> the Catholic and right-wing press was often harsh in its criticism, and there were public demonstrations when *Das Mirakel* opened in Berlin in 1914.<sup>64</sup> An unsigned article which appeared in the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* in that year gives an idea of Catholic grievances:

Was aus katholischem Besitze wird, wenn fremde Hände ihn umformen, das zeigt ja jedem, der sehen will, das Mirakel: Katholizismus ohne den Geist, der lebendig macht, seelenlose Formen- und Farbenräusche; Mystizismus, der das Ziel verloren hat, und an dem noch immer ein peinlich zu tragender Erdenrest klebt; Romantizismus ohne die blaue Blume, das herzliche Eingewurzeltsein in die logischen und sittlichen Gründe des Dargestellten; Realismus nur mit dem Scheine geschichtlicher Treue, der mit dem Stoffe arbeitet, den man sogar im Kunstgewerbe mit Recht ausrottet, nämlich materialunechtem Kitsch.

The basic objection was that Reinhardt's attempt to recreate the atmosphere of medieval Catholicism by extravagant theatrical means presented a frivolous and distorted image of their living faith. It was felt to reflect unfavourably on the modern Church because it gave little sense of the sincerely held beliefs and social duties which were celebrated by the aesthetic tradition. Non-Catholics would be likely to come away thinking that it was 'eine zwar mit den verfeinertsten Reizen aller Künste geschmückte, aber nur auf dumpfer Benebelung der Sinne und der Vernunft aufgebaute Klimbimreligion'.<sup>65</sup>

One element which caused particular offence was the lack of dignity in scenes depicting Catholic ritual and convent life; another was the use of *Ave Maria* and other liturgical texts in such a profane setting. Vollmoeller's Dionysian re-interpretation of the *Maiandacht* with which, even today, Catholic churches celebrate the month of May, was also resented. Even more

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<sup>63</sup> Hans Brečka, 'Das Mirakel', *Reichspost*, 18 September 1912, pp. 1-2; 19 September 1912, pp. 1-2 (19 September 1912, p. 1).

<sup>64</sup> This is noted with approval in a review by Rudolf Klein-Diebold, 'Das "Mirakel" in Berlin', *Hochland*, 11, ii (1913-14), 506-09 (p. 509).

<sup>65</sup> Anon., 'Quo vadimus?', *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, 31 July 1914; found in Kralik's collection of press-cuttings.

importantly, *Das Mirakel* was felt to be misleading and unauthentic in its presentation of the working of divine grace. This is a particularly sensitive issue since all but the most liberal of Catholic writers and commentators would define Catholic drama as necessarily demonstrating the impact of divine grace on individual and social life.<sup>66</sup> Whereas Catholic dogma stresses that divine forgiveness must be preceded by sincere repentance on the part of the individual sinner, this is not the main emphasis in a miracle play, and can scarcely be depicted at all in one on the scale of *Das Mirakel*. Instead, that work gives the impression 'als sei eine aus der gegenwärtigen Not des Lebens und des Leichtsinnes geborene, vielleicht nur sehr kurze Reue, allein, ohne eigene Arbeit, hinreichend, um eine wunderbare und unverzügliche Tilgung der Schuld zu bewirken'.<sup>67</sup> A very similar criticism can be levelled at Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann*: namely, that it is an 'immorality play' in which the title figure gets to heaven on the good works he has not done and the faith he has not had.<sup>68</sup> However, in order to discover why and to what extent this is the case, one must look more closely at the actual text of *Jedermann*, at the notes relating to its composition, and also at Hofmannsthal's reasons for rewriting a medieval morality play in the new cultural climate of the early twentieth century.

### *Hofmannsthal's 'Jedermann'*

The early years of the twentieth century were characterized by a resurgence of interest in religion which caught up many intellectuals. Amongst Hofmannsthal's friends, Andrian and Schmujlow-Claassen both rediscovered their Catholic faith in 1907. The best-known convert in the 'Jung Wien' circle was, however, Hermann Bahr. Having declared himself *konfessionslos* when he married a Jewish wife in 1895, he began to reconsider after a period of serious illness in 1903–04. His divorce and second marriage to the Wagnerian soprano Anna Mildenburg in 1909 made acceptance possible and he was formally received back into the Roman Catholic Church in 1914, by which time he was living in Salzburg. Bahr remained a devout Catholic for the rest of his life.

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<sup>66</sup> For a typical example see Hermann Weisser, *Calderon und das Wesen des katholischen Dramas: Eine ästhetisch-dogmatische Untersuchung* (Freiburg i.Br.: Herder, 1926), p. 8.

<sup>67</sup> Anon., 'Quo vadimus?'.

<sup>68</sup> See Styán, *Max Reinhardt*, p. 93.

With his play *Der Franzl* (1900), a memorial to the Upper Austrian dialect poet Franz Stelzhamer, he had made a move towards *Heimatkunst*; in the period shortly before the War he began to style himself a Catholic writer and courted the friendship of both Kralik and Muth. Not surprisingly, *Der Gral* regarded him as a prize scalp and published his testimony with the gloss that he was evidently in sympathy with the ideals of the *Gralbund*. Although Bahr did not bring about a rapprochement of modernist and Catholic circles, he gave his old friends indirect contact with Catholic cultural ideals, as Schnitzler noted with some displeasure in his diary: 'Bahr. Er sagt, die um Kralik herum sind jetzt die merkwürdigsten Leute in Oesterreich, und ähnlichen Stiefel.'<sup>69</sup>

Bahr's intellectual development resembles that of many 1890s aesthetes, including Hofmannsthal, insofar as he abandons the isolation of the individualist cult and finds a more satisfying sense of identity in belonging to a larger collective. In his testimony he writes of being freed 'aus dem Kerker meines Ichs' and of the solace he derives from attending mass and taking his place amongst a community of believers.<sup>70</sup> He was attracted to the Roman Catholic Church because it promised a sense of identity which could be at once religious, political and cultural. With Bahr as with Hofmannsthal it is also striking that his treatment of theatrical motifs runs parallel to his attitude towards the Catholic heritage: a Schnitzleresque fascination with the dynamics and delusions of social interaction, explored in light comedies, gradually gives way to a more conservative interpretation of the *theatrum mundi*.<sup>71</sup> In the following definition of the Baroque, written in 1907, one sees the transitional phase:

Das ist der Sinn der Barocke. Der zornigste Hass des Lebens, seinen Wahn erkennend, es als sinnlos, unwirklich, leeren Schein überwindend, dann aber, eben als leeren Schein, erst neu geniessend, mit einer unsäglichen Zärtlichkeit und in der atemlosen Furcht des Künstlers, der weiss, dass es nur ein Spiel ist, und doch auch weiss, dass dies Spiel sein einziger Ernst ist.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Arthur Schnitzler, *Tagebuch 1913–1916* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1983), p. 58: entry for 24 August 1913.

<sup>70</sup> Hermann Bahr, 'Hermann Bahr über die katholische Kirche', *Der Gral*, 8 (1913–14), 570–72 (p. 571). Even more triumphant is Kralik, 'Der alte und der neue Bahr', *Jahrbuch der deutschen Bibliophilen*, 6 (1918), 152–55.

<sup>71</sup> See Donald G. Daviau, *Der Mann von Übermorgen: Hermann Bahr 1863–1934* (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1984), especially pp. 201–40.

<sup>72</sup> Bahr, *Wien*, p. 62; this section is reprinted as 'Der Geist der Barocke' in *Österreichischer Almanach auf das Jahr 1916*, ed. by Hugo von Hofmannsthal (Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1916), pp. 127–34 (p. 134).

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Without any mention of God and morality, the carefree lifestyle of the *Lebenskünstler* is tempered by the awareness that there is nothing beyond it.

During the 1890s Hofmannsthal seems to have maintained that hostility to all forms of organized and dogmatic belief which is the hallmark of modernist culture. In 1898 he wrote to Schmujlow-Claassen: 'Hüten Sie sich vor allem was eine Form hat, ob es der Katholicismus ist oder die socialistischen Ideen. Man verfängt sich in den Formen, sie sind entsetzliche Netze.'<sup>73</sup> However, in the early years of the new century he developed at least an academic interest in the nature of faith. In a 1907 interview he talked of 'ein Wiedererwachen religiöser Instinkte und religiöser Forderungen' and also said that he had been sent many books on religious topics.<sup>74</sup> Amongst those he read, William James's undogmatic exploration of the psychology of belief, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), seems to have made particular impact.<sup>75</sup>

Hofmannsthal's decision to involve himself with the religious revival by rewriting a morality play was, however, prompted most directly by a growing ethical concern which became increasingly prominent in his work, especially his prose writings, in the early years of the twentieth century. Most notably 'Die Briefe des Zurückgekehrten' (1907) carry out a detailed diagnosis of the state of contemporary society. The returnee is dismayed to find a lack of social cohesion that mirrors the loss of psychological 'wholeness' in individuals. In the lecture 'Der Dichter und diese Zeit' (1907) Hofmannsthal explores this further, seeing the process of fragmentation to be reflected in the modern understanding of metaphor:

Es ist das Wesen dieser Zeit, daß nichts, was wirkliche Gewalt hat über die Menschen, sich metaphorisch nach außen ausspricht, sondern alles ins Innere genommen ist, während etwa die Zeit, die wir das Mittelalter nennen und deren Trümmer und Phantome in unsere hineinragen, alles, was sie in sich trug, zu einem ungeheuren Dom von Metaphern ausgebildet aus sich ins Freie emportrieb. (RA1 57)

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<sup>73</sup> Hugo von Hofmannsthal – Ria Schmujlow-Claassen, *Briefe, Aufsätze, Dokumente*, ed. by Claudia Abrecht, Marbacher Schriften, 18 (Marbach a.N.: Deutsches Literaturarchiv, 1982), p. 17: Hofmannsthal to Schmujlow-Claassen, 13 April 1898.

<sup>74</sup> Quoted in Nicholas Saul, 'Hofmannsthal and Novalis', in *Fin de siècle Vienna*, ed. by G.J. Carr and Eda Sagarra (Dublin: Trinity College, 1985), pp. 26–62 (p. 41).

<sup>75</sup> On Hofmannsthal's reading of James see Michael Hamburger, 'Hofmannsthals Bibliothek: Ein Bericht', *Euphonia*, 55 (1961), 15–76 (pp. 29–30); and Miles, *Hofmannsthal's Novel 'Andreas'*, pp. 130–36.

Whereas in the Middle Ages many metaphors were in the public domain and therefore interpreted in the same way by all, Hofmannsthal felt that, for his own generation, metaphor had become a more private experience. In the early essay 'Philosophie des Metaphorischen' (1894) he had welcomed this and looked forward to the emergence of 'eine Philosophie der subjektiven Metaphorik' (RA1 192); *Das kleine Welttheater* had gloried in that subjectivity, but, with *Jedermann*, and even more so with *Das Salzburger große Welttheater*, Hofmannsthal began the attempt to rebuild the cathedral, reviving traditional forms of religious drama, in the hope of re-establishing a sense of cultural and cultic community.

Hofmannsthal's interest in the English Everyman play dates from 1903, when his friend Clemens zu Franckenstein sent him an enthusiastic letter about a revival staged in London by the Elizabethan Stage Society. By 1906 he had produced four prose scenes, including the dispute between Jedermann and Verwandtschaft, which has already been discussed. It is clear that Hofmannsthal originally intended a radical redefinition of the medieval morality play, which would have subordinated its traditional emphases to the claims of the subjective world theatre in a manner reminiscent of *Der Tor und der Tod*. Also striking is the way in which the legacy of Goethe's *Faust* influenced these plans. The uneasy master-servant relationship between Jedermann and Mammon recalls the *Teufelspakt* of Faust and Mephistopheles, the devil and Mammon of course being linked by Goethe in the scene at the Emperor's court. Josepha Sonnleithnerin, a wine-grower's daughter who has caught Jedermann's roving eye, appears as a second Gretchen; Mammon offers to use Jedermann's wealth to bring his sensual desires to rapid fulfilment, but in so doing robs the dreams of their magic and fills his master with revulsion.

The mood and situation of the central character in the prose fragment are extremely reminiscent of 'Wald und Höhle'. Jedermann is a melancholy, pensive figure, consumed by Romantic anxiety and torn by conflicting desires. Like Faust, he has an enormous thirst for life, but is uneasy about the means of satisfying it, not because he is afraid of the consequences but because he knows that the pleasure will be shortlived. As in 'Wald und Höhle', the tormented individual sets himself against a grandiose natural backdrop. The processes of nature become an immense Goethean 'Weben' reminding Jedermann that he is mortal and will one day die:

Wenn ich in dieses Weben der Welt hineinschaue, in dies unaufhaltsame Hingleiten, dieses lautlose, süße Sichverzehren, so befällt mich eine rasende Ungeduld. [...] Ich bin da, ich

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einzelnes Leben, und da ist die Welt, funkelt herauf durch die Stämme, Tal an Tal. Nicht auszuschöpfen! Und ich, ich schwinde hin, ich bin schon bald dahin! (W9 12)

The Christian framework of the morality play gives way to a pantheistic and apparently amoral cycle of death and renewal in which Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann* resents having to play a part.

More traditional emphases reasserted themselves in the finished verse drama, on which Hofmannsthal resumed work in 1910. Styling himself 'der Restaurator, sehr bescheidne und ängstliche Restaurator' (W9 261), Hofmannsthal drew not only on the English *Everyman* play but also on several other sources, including Hans Sachs's *Ein comedi von dem reichen sterbenden menschen, der Hecastus genannt* (1549).<sup>76</sup> However, having grown out of earlier clashes between individual aspiration and external morality, between private and public theatres, Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann* still contains a partial revaluation of the medieval world-view. This begins with the herald's introductory speech which makes no mention of sin or redemption but places strong emphasis on the transience of human life: 'Darin wird euch gewiesen werden, / Wie unsere Tag und Werk auf Erden / Vergänglich sind und hinfällig gar' (W9 35).

Whereas, in the English morality play, *Everyman* was accosted by Death as soon as he stepped onto the stage, Hofmannsthal, following the model of Sachs, placed this encounter at the centre of the action, devoting the preceding section to a depiction of 'Jedermanns Tageslauf', the pleasurable, carefree, but selfish existence which his wealth had enabled Jedermann to build for himself. In his view it was a wise man who invented money:

Dadurch ist unsere ganze Welt  
In ein höher Ansehen gestellt  
Und jeder Mensch in seinem Bereich  
Schier einer kleinen Gottheit gleich. (W9 44)

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<sup>76</sup> On *Jedermann* and its sources see the introduction by Margaret Jacobs to Hofmannsthal, *Jedermann: Das Spiel vom Sterben des reichen Mannes* (Edinburgh and London: Nelson, 1957), pp. xvii–xxxii; and, for a more recent discussion, Heinz Rölleke, 'Hugo von Hofmannsthal: "Jedermann"', in *Interpretationen: Dramen des 20. Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1996), I, 92–108. Detailed analyses of the play itself can be found in Brian Coghlan, *Hofmannsthal's Festival Dramas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), pp. 17–82; and Hartmut Müller, *Hofmannsthal: Jedermann, Grundlagen und Gedanken zum Verständnis des Dramas*, 6366 (Frankfurt a.M.: Diesterweg, 1974).

Hofmannsthal's depiction of the miniature *Welttheater* in which the rich man rules supreme is one of the most successful aspects of his modernization. The scene in which the evil genius Mammon emerges from his coffer and confronts Jedermann with his impotence is theatrically one of the most effective in the play and conveys Hofmannsthal's warning against modern materialism, whilst also remaining faithful to the spirit of the morality play.

Like Andrea in Hofmannsthal's lyrical drama *Gestern*, Jedermann faces a number of challenges which undermine his complacency and create a growing sense of unease. In Reinhardt's productions each of Jedermann's uncomfortable encounters, with a debtor and his family, with a neighbour who has fallen on hard times, and with his pious mother, was followed by the musical motif of a drum-beat and distant bells. By having Jedermann repeatedly respond by wiping his hand across his brow as the music was heard, the director was able to make the hollow theatricality of Jedermann's lifestyle all the more evident.<sup>77</sup> Leading up to the music heard at the end of Jedermann's conversation with his mother, this encouraged the spectator to sympathize with (and momentarily share) her belief that it was a sign of Jedermann's impending death, rather than announcing the arrival of his mistress and a band of revellers. The repetition of the musical motif underlined the fragility of Jedermann's world and helped to explain why that mood of 'Melancholie und Tod' (W9 53), brought to the surface by his mother's talk of dying, had gained such a hold on his imagination. After this, even the carefree atmosphere of the banquet scene, which Reinhardt built into a glorious celebration of life and love, could only briefly banish the clouds, the appearance of Death at the table being the logical culmination of what had come before.

As well as expanding the role of Mammon and giving Jedermann many symptoms of the modern melancholic, Hofmannsthal also made free with his sources in the latter part of the play, where he attempted to establish a basis for Jedermann's redemption which would find wide acceptance.<sup>78</sup> Jedermann's relationship to the allegorical figure of Good Works, which Hofmannsthal sketched out in 1904 and incorporated into his final conception of the play almost without alteration, is vitally important to this.

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<sup>77</sup> Stefan Janson, *Hugo von Hofmannsthals 'Jedermann' in der Regiearbeit durch Max Reinhardt*, Würzburger Hochschulschriften zur neueren deutschen Literaturgeschichte, 4 (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1978), pp. 15–21.

<sup>78</sup> On Jedermann's melancholia, see Rölleke, 'Hugo von Hofmannsthal: "Jedermann"', pp. 101–06.

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### Jedermann und seine Werke.

Zuerst graust's ihn, dass dies seine Werke sind. So schwach, hohläugig. Der Geruch der elenden Krankenstube um sie [...]. Dann fängt er an sie zu sehen, wie die Geliebte durch Schleier, durch Hüllen hindurchblickend. Eben weil dies seine Werke sind. Darin aber liegt noch nicht das Unendliche: dies kommt erst dann, wenn er in ihr eben das andre, was er nicht ist, liebt [...]. (W9 135)

Good Works is a feeble cripple because Jedermann has done so little to help others. In Hofmannsthal's final version she tells him, 'Mein Jedermann, ich gehör zu dir, / Um deinetwillen lieg ich hier' (W9 81). She is the part of himself that he disregarded and only belatedly comes to appreciate. Both in the note and in the final text, an aesthetic insight stands in the place of a moral one: Jedermann begins to appreciate his potential when he glimpses the beauty behind the veil of suffering, when he discovers a love purer than that of his mistress. Although he enjoyed life, he now realizes that he could have lived it differently. This realization not only restores Good Works to health but is the cue for her 'sister' Faith to appear. Having regained confidence in himself, Jedermann can rediscover the spiritual dimension.

Returning to Hofmannsthal's 1904 note, the echoes of Goethe's *Faust* and of *Der Tor und der Tod* are unmistakable when it continues thus:

nun drängt es ihn zum Grabe als zu einer mystischen Weihe, in der er unglaublich zur Ruhe, zu sich selber kommen mag, wie geschüttelte Erbsen, wie eine gerüttelte Flüssigkeit. Fast sinnlich verlangt es ihn danach, raschen Schrittes dorthin zu eilen, wovor ihn früher Grausen durchrüttelte, wie vor einem offenen Rachen.

Jedermann geht schließlich auf das Grab zu, wie wenn es 'Umkehr' wäre, und neuer Eingang ins Leben. (W9 135)

As in the penultimate scene of *Faust*, where the stage direction reads 'Der greuliche Höllenrachen tut sich links auf', the fearsome Baroque image of the jaws of hell is conjured up, only to be brushed aside. The clash between the traditional notion of world theatre and the more subjective expectations of the aesthete, which characterized *Der Tor und der Tod*, is echoed in Jedermann's redefinition of death as a second chance at life. The sensuality of his longing suggests psychological continuity, the difference being that this trait, like his eye for a beautiful woman, is now incorporated into the spiritual experience.

How is this to be reconciled with the anger of the Lord in the prologue and his insistence that every man should be brought to account for his earthly life?

Hofmannsthal's solution is intimated in the prologue when the Old Testament God of vengeance suddenly adopts a more conciliatory tone, reminding Man of His sacrifice on the cross. Hofmannsthal, like Goethe before him, rejects a consistent iconography; although he opens with a male divinity, Jedermann's salvation is brought about by elements of 'das Ewig-Weibliche' — two female allegories and his mother guiding him from this world to the next. When it matters, Jedermann discovers a New Testament God of forgiveness who gave His son to redeem the sins of mankind. Hofmannsthal formulates this as: 'Jederm: statt des reckoning ist das Erscheinen vor Gott: durchsichtig vor ihm stehen' (W9 139). In other words, Hofmannsthal's Jedermann gets to heaven on an even smaller measure of good intentions than Goethe's Faust.

Hofmannsthal's published comments on *Jedermann* emphasize that the core of the *Everyman* play is 'menschlich absolut, keiner bestimmten Zeit angehörig, nicht einmal mit dem christlichen Dogma unlöslich verbunden' (D3 90). Once human bonds have failed and man has been denuded of his material possessions, he discovers the strength to strive for higher things. However, when Eberhard von Bodenhausen complained that the ending of *Jedermann* left him cold and joked that he found himself agreeing with the devil, Hofmannsthal did not defend the universality of the text, as above, but replied that it was in the nature of the morality play to be two-dimensional, the third dimension only being provided 'durch den Bezug auf ein außerhalb seiendes — die Glaubenswahrheiten' (W9 270). This seems to imply that at least some attachment to Christianity is required after all, in order to respond sympathetically to the play.

*Jedermann* was enormously important for Hofmannsthal's later development, insofar as it encouraged him to dabble in *völkisch* cultural politics and, however unintentionally, to begin his move towards the right of the political spectrum. Both his prior vision of the play and his response to the premiere show that he was beginning in 1911 to formulate a concept of popular theatre and to build himself a niche within it. 'Das alte Spiel von Jedermann', published on the day of the premiere, not only outlines the plot in compelling impressionistic prose but also anticipates its reception in the auditorium. As soon as the lights go down, the crowd of randomly assembled people is to become 'mit einem Schlag ein Wesen: die Menge' (D3 93). Hofmannsthal hopes that this compound being will be mesmerized by the stage presence of Moissi as Jedermann, will identify with the character's exuberant love of life,

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be aghast when the ghostly figure of Death appears amongst the revellers, and draw the appropriate moral conclusions from his demise.

'Das Spiel vor der Menge', written under the immediate impact of the premiere, goes further in that it presents not only *Jedermann* but also the Greek adaptations as an attempt to expand the familiar repertoire and make neglected works accessible to people from every walk of life. However, the confident tone of the opening paragraphs gives way to thinly veiled uncertainty as to how the metaphysics of *Jedermann* will be received. Will an inattentive city audience be able to cope with 'ein menschliches Märchen [...] in christlichem Gewand'? Probably not, but it should pose no difficulties for a 'Volk' in touch with its communal heritage: 'Publikum ist schwankend, kurzsinig und launisch; das Volk ist alt und weise, ein Riesenleib, der wohl die Nahrung kennt, die ihm bekommt. Es versteht und empfängt in einer großen Weise und teilt das Heiligste seines Besitzes den Einzelnen mit, die rein und bewußt aus ihm hervortreten' (D3 106). This wishful thinking had little rational foundation, but Hofmannsthal was to become more and more convinced by it. The motto of 'Das Spiel vor der Menge', "'Sorge, welche du gewinnest, / Merke, wen du dir entfremdest!'" (D3 103), provides further evidence that Hofmannsthal was preoccupied with notions of populism; and a letter to his father boasts that the play has found favour with people of every class and political persuasion, even his multifarious friends:

Der Erfolg ist über alle Erwartung groß und schön, er reicht von den Schwestern und Söhnen des Kaisers bis zu den Friseurgehilfen im Hotel Adlon, war ebenso stark bei Kessler, Schröder und Erich Schmidt als bei den 300 gemeinen Soldaten des 2<sup>ten</sup> Garderegiments, die in der Premiere waren, ebenso tief gehend bei den Mitgliedern evangelischer Vereine wie bei jüdischen Bankiers, er umfasst in der Presse alle Schattierungen, die clericale Germania ebenso wie den socialistischen Vorwärts, die Kreuzzeitung wie den Börsencourier. (W9 267)

Hofmannsthal omits to mention that some spectators had taken offence at Moissi's recitation of the Lord's Prayer and that, of his friends, Bodenhausen, for one, had been less than wholly impressed.

In reality, public reaction was mixed. Whereas the Archbishop of Salzburg was later to give *Jedermann* his wholehearted support, a report to the Bishop of Breslau asserted after the 1911 premiere that 'die Schilderung des Wohllebens verletzt das sittliche Empfinden' and concluded that the inadequate theological basis of *Jedermann*'s salvation made it 'als religiöses Festspiel ungeeignet' (W9 268). In the press, several critics questioned the suitability

of the Berlin venue and the relevance of the text to a modern audience. Siegfried Jacobsohn, for example, thought that Reinhardt's instinct had deserted him:

Früher hätte er sich bei diesem Spiel von 'Jedermann' gesagt, daß es in eine Kirche oder auf die Germanistenkneipe gehört: vor ganz heiße oder ganz kalte Gemüter, vor Gläubige oder vor Durchschauer, vor Anwärter des Himmels oder vor uns Mephistos — auf keinen Fall aber vor jedermann. Jetzt bringt er es gleich vor fünftausend Jedermanns, in deren Gefühls- und Interessensphäre es niemals eindringen wird.<sup>79</sup>

Stressing the individuality of the spectators in a manner reminiscent of the young Hofmannsthal but diametrically opposed to his newfound populism, Jacobsohn sees a simple choice: either play it for Germanists, in which case the interest would be purely academic or aesthetic; or play it for a Christian audience as a devotional text. The point is echoed by Julius Bab, who finds Hofmannsthal's populism pretentious and declares 'dies Ganze bleibt doch nur dem naiven altchristlichen Glauben, — oder dem kühlen, kulturhistorischen Interesse zugänglich'.<sup>80</sup> Others, notably Alfred Kerr, were unhappy with Hofmannsthal's use of religious allegory which, when combined with the profane setting and Reinhardt's dazzling theatrical effects, seemed to add up to a travesty of religious drama. Summing up the atmosphere of the production in Jewish jargon as 'Oberchammerngau', Kerr recommended, 'man lasse die Gefühle denen, zum Donnerwetter, die sie haben'.<sup>81</sup> One can appreciate his unease insofar as the finished text contains at least two new elements which encourage a conventional religious interpretation — Jedermann's recitation of the Lord's Prayer and the traditional piety of his mother — curious inclusions, given Hofmannsthal's insistence that he was reviving 'dieses allen Zeiten gehörige und allgemein gültige Märchen' (D3 89).

In the years leading up to the First World War *Jedermann* was the most frequently staged of Hofmannsthal's works, being seen in most of the major

<sup>79</sup> Siegfried Jacobsohn, *Die Schaubühne*, 49 (7 December 1911), pp. 539–41. This is reproduced, together with other reviews of the premiere, in *'Im Geschwätz der elenden Zeitungsschreiber': Kritiken zu den Uraufführungen Hugo von Hofmannsthals in Berlin*, ed. by Bernd Sösemann and Holger Kreitling (Berlin: Nicolai, 1989), pp. 82–84 (p. 82). Much of the same material may also be found in Heinz Rölleke, *Erläuterungen und Dokumente: Hugo von Hofmannsthal: Jedermann* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1996), pp. 62–72.

<sup>80</sup> Julius Bab, 'Volkskunst', *Die Gegenwart*, 50 (9 December 1911), pp. 842 ff; reproduced in *'Im Geschwätz der elenden Zeitungsschreiber'*, pp. 84–87 (p. 85).

<sup>81</sup> Alfred Kerr, *Der Tag*, 284 (3 December 1911); reproduced in *'Im Geschwätz der elenden Zeitungsschreiber'*, pp. 75–77 (p. 76).

German-speaking cities. But does it deserve to be placed in the same category as Vollmoeller's *Mirakel*, which also toured Europe at this time? Certainly, when staged in conventional auditoria and arena settings, *Jedermann* always smacked of pseudo-religiosity; no commentator thought in 1911 that the play was more than an isolated artistic experiment, and it is unlikely that any clergyman would have allowed it to be staged in front of a church, let alone a cathedral. However, there can be little doubt that Hofmannsthal intended from the outset to convey a moral message rather than merely providing grist for Reinhardt's spectacular mill. The pernicious effects of materialism, which his adaptation brings to the foreground, were to remain a major concern, to the extent that, in 'Die Idee Europa' (1917) he expresses the hope that the War will generate 'ein neues europäisches Ich, ein geändertes Verhältnis des Ich zum Dasein, zum Geld' (RA2 52). It is a result of this continuity in his thought that *Jedermann* (unlike *Elektra*) was not a work which Hofmannsthal rapidly outgrew; rather, with the creation of the Salzburg Festival in 1920, the morality play found a cultural backdrop capable of raising it above the level of pseudo-religiosity; ceasing in the postwar period to be an admonitory text, it instead became a vehicle to celebrate what in 1919 Hofmannsthal called 'die moralische Niederlage, die der Geldbegriff erlitten hat' (RA2 61).

Notwithstanding this success, an entry in Hofmannsthal's *Buch der Freunde* (1921) reveals a nagging unease: 'Hinter den Rücken des Geldwesens zu gelangen, ist vielleicht der Sinn der moralischen und sogar religiösen Revolution, in der wir zu stehen scheinen' (RA3 279). Hofmannsthal's uncertainty can be attributed to the changed spiritual climate of the early 1920s which threatens to undermine the fragile universality of his adaptation. At a time of religious revival, a modernized morality play may be more fashionable, but the technique of using a religious allegory to convey a moral but not necessarily Christian message is inevitably more problematic. In the immediate postwar period this was not least because the Catholic amateur movement was drawing on the same cultural traditions, without commercialism and without attempting to secularize them.

## CHAPTER SIX

### WAR AND CULTURAL CONSERVATISM

*Ein ungeheueres meteorologisches Phänomen hat die Atmosphäre verändert, in der wir atmen — und auf immer: denn nichts kehrt wieder, das einmal dahingegangen ist. (RA2 358)*

#### *Patriotism and Propaganda*

When war broke out in 1914, the euphoria that was widespread amongst Europe's intellectual elites was shared, in Austria, by Kralik and initially by Hofmannsthal. The enthusiasm of both was prompted by a longstanding dissatisfaction with the character of Austrian society, its politics and its culture. Hofmannsthal, for his part, regretted the decline of the aristocracy and intensely disliked what he called Vienna's 'Pöbelherrschaft';<sup>1</sup> he had repeatedly expressed concern about the increasing lack of community and the spread of materialist values; and in contrast to Reinhardt's achievements in Berlin, the shortcomings of the Burgtheater appeared all the greater. Kralik, no less dissatisfied, had long attacked the secularism and commercialism of modern Austria, blaming the decline of national culture on the prominence of liberal and Social Democratic groupings and their modernist tastes. Both therefore welcomed war, in the belief that it would clear the ground for an Austria more in keeping with their ideals. Kralik looked forward to strong dynastic rule, religious revival, and a new emphasis on national culture; Hofmannsthal, meanwhile, gradually gave precise meaning to the 'österreichische Idee' which, as early as 1913, Andrian had urged him to set against the feelings of despondency prompted by the prewar situation.<sup>2</sup>

For Hofmannsthal, the First World War not only swept away the aberrations of the recent past, it also made him realize that there were many aspects of Austria's heritage which he held dear. *Jedermann* had established moral

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<sup>1</sup> Hofmannsthal – Andrian, *Briefwechsel*, p. 198: Hofmannsthal to Andrian, 24 August 1913.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 201–05: Andrian to Hofmannsthal, 18 September 1913.

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concerns and artistic affinities which were to be the foundation of his cultural conservatism, and this took shape during the War, in such a way that Hofmannsthal's wartime politics can valuably be set alongside Kralik's. Continuing to place amateur and professional drama side by side, this and the following chapter show that, in the changed atmosphere of the War and its aftermath, there were striking parallels between the cultural mainstream and the Catholic sub-culture. In particular, mainstream writers turned to the Catholic heritage for inspiration, as they tried to provide comfort for the defeated populace and a cultural identity for the new Austrian Republic. As the second section of this chapter will show, a strong Catholic *Laienspiel* movement, which built on Kralik's ideas and drew heavily on his work, emerged in Austria in the period when the Salzburg Festival was being planned, and co-existed with it throughout the First Republic. Since Chapter Seven will focus on Hofmannsthal and the Salzburg Festival, the final section of this chapter is devoted to Kralik, to an assessment of his achievements and of his impact on Austrian cultural life.

During the First World War both Hofmannsthal and Kralik were active as journalists and, like many cultural figures, seemed to enjoy the feeling that this contribution to the war effort gave them a public role. Aiming to boost morale and influence public opinion at home, Kralik wrote regular articles in the *Reichspost* and in Catholic journals such as *Der Gral*, as well as setting out his views in a number of longer publications. Since metaphors of war and struggle had featured strongly in the rhetoric of the *katholischer Literaturstreit*, there was continuity in Kralik's wartime writings; he clearly saw the First World War as an intensification of an ongoing battle of *Weltanschauungen*, pitting Catholic against heathen, monarchist against republican, Germanic culture against that of inferior peoples. For this reason, he was certain that Austria was fighting a just and holy war which would ultimately bring his cultural ideal to fulfilment.

Hofmannsthal not only wrote for the *Neue Freie Presse* and other major newspapers but also enjoyed taking on a quasi-ambassadorial role and conveying 'einen discreten Austriacismus' to audiences in Berlin, Scandinavia, Switzerland and Poland.<sup>3</sup> At a time when the military alliance of Germany and Austria understandably fostered Pan-German feeling this discreet

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<sup>3</sup> Hofmannsthal – Andrian, *Briefwechsel*, p. 244: Hofmannsthal to Andrian, 1 November 1916. For a detailed account of Hofmannsthal's wartime activity see Heinz Lunzer, *Hofmannsthals politische Tätigkeit in den Jahren 1914–1917* (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1981).

Austrianism needed careful definition, not only abroad but also for the home audience. This was the objective of the lecture 'Österreich im Spiegel seiner Dichtung' (1916) which Hofmannsthal gave both in Warsaw and in Vienna. On the latter occasion he tried to reach ordinary people by venturing into the 'Urania', an adult education institution with which Kralik had long been associated. In a broad survey Hofmannsthal asserts the unique character of Austrian literature, its basis in popular traditions and the natural relationship between landscape and cultural production. The result is a proud and deep-rooted sense of regional identity which Hofmannsthal urges his audience to set against the present upsurge of Pan-German sentiment. 'Dieser Dualismus des Gefühles: unsere Zugehörigkeit zu Österreich, unsere kulturelle Zugehörigkeit zum deutschen Gesamtwesen müssen wir uns zu erhalten wissen in der furchtbaren und kritischen kulturellen und politischen Situation, in welcher wir uns befinden' (RA2 22). The difficulty of retaining a distinct cultural identity for Austria, at a time when it was relying on German military assistance, and when a vociferous Pan-German group, which included Kralik, was asserting that the future was *großdeutsch*, anticipates the problems that were to be faced by the enfeebled rump Republic. In pinpointing this issue, Hofmannsthal also identifies part of the task for Salzburg.

As W.E. Yates has argued, a view of cultural history underpins the spiritual and intellectual crisis of 'Ein Brief' to the extent that Hofmannsthal's sights were set on a form of conservative reconstruction soon after 1900.<sup>4</sup> Whereas in that essay the breakdown of cultural traditions and continuities was traced right back to the Renaissance, during the War Hofmannsthal preferred to highlight the French Revolution as the starting-point for those liberal and nationalist ideologies which seemed to be its underlying causes (RA2 418). For him, as for Kralik, the conviction that this era was drawing to a close gave urgency and focus to the campaign for reconstruction, effectively shifting it from the personal to the social and political sphere. Having advocated in 'Der Dichter und diese Zeit' (1907) that the poet should create pattern and meaning out of chaos, less than a decade later Hofmannsthal made this aesthetic process the basis of his political stance, and asserted its objective value.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> W.E. Yates, 'Hofmannsthal and the Renaissance or: Once More unto "Ein Brief"', *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, n.s. 61 (1992), 99–118.

<sup>5</sup> On this continuity see Hermann Rudolph, *Kulturrkritik und konservative Revolution: Zum kulturell-politischen Denken Hofmannsthals und seinem problemgeschichtlichen Kontext* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1971), especially pp. 81–109.

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Hofmannsthal's wartime essays constitute a critical re-assessment of his established concerns and beliefs, especially with regard to Austria's history and culture. While Coghlan has revealed the subtlety of his arguments and the sensitivity with which he separated patriotism from chauvinism,<sup>6</sup> the same cannot, unfortunately, be said of Kralik, who invariably saw issues in black-and-white terms, also engaging in extravagant diatribes against the enemy and against groups within Austria who questioned the justness of the War. Nevertheless, there were still similarities between Hofmannsthal's patriotic imagination and that of the conservative Catholic: Hofmannsthal and Kralik both responded to the enormity of the *Weltenbrand* by viewing it in metaphysical terms, stepping back from immediate impressions in order to view events from a historical perspective, and trying to establish a teleology. Although Hofmannsthal was relatively sparing with religious metaphors, his very first wartime essay, 'Appell an die oberen Stände' (1914), suggested that, with the benefit of hindsight, present events would appear as a dark dream 'durch dessen Finsternisse doch Gottes Licht hinzuckte, Gottes Atem hinwehte, fühlbarer als in öden, stockenden Jahren, die wir zuvor zu ertragen hatten' (RA2 347). Kralik expressed similar ideas in an even more direct manner: 'Der Krieg ist uns von Gott als Prüfung, als Erprobung geschickt; und demnach wird er dem einen zum Verderben, dem andern zur Bewährung und zum Segen gereichen.'<sup>7</sup>

Strikingly, both writers used theatrical metaphors as they reflected on the course of the War. In the essay 'Die Hauptakte', published in the *Reichspost* on 21 March 1915, Kralik wrote of it as a five-act heroic drama and expressed the belief that the first three acts were already over. Although there is an unpleasant bullishness in his assertion that the murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand is 'eine Einleitung, wie sie weder der Weltendichter, noch einer seiner Nachahmer auf den weltbedeutenden Brettern jemals so großartig, so ergreifend einem Weltschauspiel vorausgesetzt hat', the essay as a whole reads as a brave attempt to give hope in dark days.<sup>8</sup> Writing on the eve of Italy's entry into the War, he asks: 'Wird das Drama zum Festspiel oder zur Tragödie

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<sup>6</sup> Coghlan, *Hofmannsthal's Festival Dramas*, pp. 83–149.

<sup>7</sup> Kralik, 'Aufschwung', *Der Gral*, 9 (1914–15), 601–03 (p. 601).

<sup>8</sup> Kralik, 'Die Hauptakte', *Reichspost*, 21 March 1915; reprinted in the collection of Kralik's wartime journalism *Vom Weltkrieg zum Weltbund: Abhandlungen, Aufsätze, Gedanken und Stimmungen* (Innsbruck: Verlagsanstalt Tyrolia, 1916), pp. 176–82 (p. 177).

werden?'<sup>9</sup> Unable to give an answer, he simply reminds his readers that they are not spectators: 'Wir alle stehen als Mithandelnde auf dem Kriegstheater.'<sup>10</sup>

In the essays 'Die Taten und der Ruhm' (1915) and 'Geist der Karpathen' (1915), which are Hofmannsthal's most direct reflections on the fighting, he introduces the Hegelian idea of a suprapersonal *Geist* to give a sense of purpose and historical necessity. As he considers whether Austria's heroes of the eastern front will rank alongside those of classical antiquity, his approach is almost that of the historical dramatist; and indeed, in 'Geist der Karpathen' the perspective is that of monumental world theatre, over which a suprahuman spirit presides: 'Dies gegen Osten gekrümmte Waldgebirge, dieser östliche Bergwall der Monarchie ist durch ein ungeheures Geschick zu einer heroischen Landschaft ohnegleichen geworden. Tal um Tal, Schlucht um Schlucht, sie waren der Schauplatz, auf dem der Krieg sich seine Helden erzog' (RA2 412–13). Since this is only a brief glimpse of the overused 'theatre of war', it stops just short of jingoistic glorification.

Once victory had been achieved on the Serbian front, Austria's official war aims became extremely unclear, indeed it has been argued that the majority were from the outset 'internal', having to do with domestic restructuring and re-orientation. The formulation of these was not a matter of Imperial policy, or even of parliamentary debate, but rather the subject of a wide-ranging discussion conducted in the press and through the promulgation of numerous *Denkschriften*.<sup>11</sup> Given their idealistic hopes, it is not surprising that both Kralik and Hofmannsthal were drawn into venturing speculative blueprints for the future. As Ramhardtter has shown, Kralik's vision of the new world order was, if anything, even more fanciful than his interpretation of present events. Even in the last days of the War he remained naively optimistic: victory would lay the foundation for an empire stretching from the North Pole to the Persian Gulf and would allow Austria to dominate world politics.<sup>12</sup> Hofmannsthal too was inspired by the idea of *Mitteuropa*, but for him the geographical situation

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<sup>9</sup> Kralik, 'Die Hauptakte', p. 178.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>11</sup> John W. Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna: Christian Socialism in Power, 1897–1918* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 369–87 (p. 377); see also Fritz Fellner, 'Denkschriften aus Österreich: Die österreichische Mitteleuropa-Diskussion in Wissenschaft und Politik 1915/16', in *Geschichte zwischen Freiheit und Ordnung: Gerald Stourzh zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. by Emil Brix, Thomas Fröschl and Josef Leidenfrost (Graz, Vienna and Cologne: Verlag Styria, 1991), pp. 145–62.

<sup>12</sup> Günther Ramhardtter, *Geschichtswissenschaft und Patriotismus: Österreichische Historiker im Weltkrieg 1914–1918* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1973), pp. 118–33.

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of the Habsburg empire and its two-thousand-year history were far more than just an excuse for cultural chauvinism. Building on an earlier remark that a true state needs a sense of divinely ordained mission (RA2 21), 'Die österreichische Idee' (1917) gives precise if idealistic form to this: Hofmannsthal writes of the Austrian Empire as a meeting point and a barrier between east and west, north and south. As such, it offers the rest of Europe a model of how the nationalities can live together in harmony, it is Europe in miniature.

As Hofmannsthal's visionary patriotism grows, so he makes an increasingly sharp distinction between Prussia and Austria, the latter being the true heir to the 'German' cultural tradition. Whereas the essay 'Bücher für diese Zeit' (1914) makes no distinction between Austrian and German literature, the crude list of contrasts put together under the heading 'Preuße und Österreicher' (1917) is almost worthy of Kralik. However, in spite of his desire to draw a clear line, Hofmannsthal is wary of stating explicitly that the traditions associated with Roman Catholicism are central to this Austrian identity. He skirts around this difficulty by means of synthesis and equivocation. Stifter's simple faith becomes 'die Synthese zwischen Christlich und Antik, eine eigentlich christliche Seelenhaltung mit einem antiken Naturkraftglauben' (RA2 18); similarly, one of his tags for Austria in 'Preuße und Österreicher' is 'alles von außen her: Natur und Gott'. This uneasiness with Catholic piety *per se* weakens the sense of uniquely Austrian *Heimat*, making the next two features on the list, 'Heimatliebe als Zusammenhaltendes' and 'mehr Frömmigkeit' (RA2 459), seem synonymous and therefore little different from the German sense of *Heimat*, which also relied on a pious regionalism.

Hofmannsthal's venom against Prussia was a response to Austria's apparent indifference to its own history and cultural traditions. Always fond of creating poetic myths, he now saw the need for an Austrian national mythology to perpetuate the memory of figures from the past who could inspire, warn and instruct the present generation. Kralik had, of course, been trying to provide this, albeit with a stronger Catholic emphasis, for many years, and they had at least one hero in common — Prince Eugene of Savoy. Kralik's heroic epic *Prinz Eugenius der edle Ritter* (1896) was followed during the War by two Hofmannsthal works: *Prinz Eugen, der edle Ritter* (1915), an illustrated history for children, and the essay 'Worte zum Gedächtnis des Prinzen Eugen' (1914). There he presented the hero of 1683 as a political visionary who in the aftermath of war laid the foundations of modern Austria and exemplified the statesmanship required of soldiers in peacetime.

The desire to make Austrians proud of their cultural heritage and to demonstrate its richness and individual character to the rest of the German-speaking world was the impulse behind the Österreichische Bibliothek project, which Hofmannsthal launched in 1915. Each of the twenty-six volumes stressed either an achievement in the past, or a neglected facet of the modern cultural landscape; the introductions, commissioned from prominent historians and writers, highlighted the present relevance of the historical material. The Österreichische Bibliothek is important because it brought Kralik and Hofmannsthal into direct professional contact for the first and only time. The tensions and calculations in this collaboration make it possible to assess not only the extent of Hofmannsthal's conservatism but also the state of relations between modernist and Catholic culture at this time; both factors will be significant when, for amateurs and professionals alike, drama becomes the prime means of bringing an image of Austria's past into present consciousness.<sup>13</sup>

As general editor of the Österreichische Bibliothek Hofmannsthal realized that, if the series was to have wide appeal at home, his advisory board, made up of eleven prominent Austrian writers and historians, would have to give the impression that patriotic loyalty had overcome political barriers. He wrote to Andrian, 'wenn der Anschluß an die nicht-liberale Sphäre nicht herzustellen ist, bleibt das Ganze, culturpolitisch, totgeboren'.<sup>14</sup> What this meant in practice was that no Viennese Jewish writers were involved and that he canvassed support from prominent right-wing figures. Although Hofmannsthal was clearly nervous of approaching the notoriously fearsome Kralik, his name appears on the final list, together with those of Andrian and Max Mell, the most conservative and Catholic of Hofmannsthal's friends; also invited was Anton Wildgans, whose patriotic poems had made considerable impact as pamphlets and were collected together as the twelfth volume in the series (*Österreichische Gedichte*); the list of historians included Heinrich Friedjung, mentioned in Chapter Three as a member of the 'Pernerstorfer circle', and

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<sup>13</sup> An account of relations between Hofmannsthal and Kralik, and especially of this collaboration, is given in Bernhard Doppler, 'Konkurrenz um das Katholisch-Österreichische: Hofmannsthal, Richard von Kralik und das Haus Habsburg: Eine Dokumentation', *Hofmannsthal-Blätter*, 40 (1990), 73–92.

<sup>14</sup> Hofmannsthal – Andrian, *Briefwechsel*, p. 208: Hofmannsthal to Andrian, autumn 1914. The importance which Hofmannsthal attached to ensuring that the series was well received in Austria suggests that, contrary to Yates's assertion, he was not concerned predominantly with presenting Austrian culture to the rest of the German-speaking world.

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Hans Schlitter, director of the national archives, who had collaborated with Kralik on the volume *Wien: Geschichte der Kaiserstadt und ihrer Kultur* (1912).

Kralik, like most other members of the advisory board, selected the material and wrote the introduction and conclusion for one volume of the Österreichische Bibliothek. Published in the second series of six, it featured the seventeenth-century court preacher Abraham a Santa Clara. It is clear, especially from Hofmannsthal's correspondence with the Insel-Verlag, that Hofmannsthal was somewhat in awe of Kralik, whom he describes as 'der poeta laureatus der christlich sozialen Partei'.<sup>15</sup> He states repeatedly that 'die Zusammenstellung der Mitarbeiter hat auch politischen Sinn. [...] Aus ihrem Kreise verspreche ich mir die stärkste Förderung des Unternehmens'.<sup>16</sup> For that reason Hofmannsthal went out of his way not to antagonize Kralik, even though this obliged him to lower his academic standards. When the Insel-Verlag wanted to 'improve' Kralik's unscholarly and idiosyncratic preface, Hofmannsthal refused permission, explaining his reasons thus:

Sie finden unter diesen Manuskripten eines (Auswahl aus Abraham a Santa Clara) das in gewisser Beziehung Ihre Verwunderung erregen wird. Sie werden das Gefühl haben, daß irgend ein Philologe diese Auswahl ordentlicher gemacht hätte und auch Vorrede und Nachwort wird sozusagen kulturell Ihr Erstaunen erregen und Sie werden wünschen nicht allzu viel Bändchen von dieser Art in der Sammlung zu finden. Damit stimme ich vollkommen überein. Aber das Ganze, so wie es ist, ist eben eine Art Kulturdokument und durfte nicht übergangen werden. Der Herausgeber ist der geistige Exponent und sozusagen kultureller Führer der so ungemein mächtigen und wichtigen christlichsozialen Partei, und das Bändchen, Bild und Rahmen, bilden eine Einheit, die ich nicht missen konnte.<sup>17</sup>

The criticisms of Kralik's style are broadly justified; but Hofmannsthal takes the view that the political value of his name outweighs any damage which might be done to the whole library by the tendentiousness and idiosyncrasy of one volume. And one might even see in Hofmannsthal's remarks a hint that with this 'Kulturdokument' Kralik will be condemned out of his own mouth.

The Österreichische Bibliothek reveals several facets of Hofmannsthal's cultural politics. Firstly, it shows that, although he was neither a practising Catholic nor an ardent monarchist, his brand of patriotism was not completely

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<sup>15</sup> Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Briefwechsel mit dem Insel-Verlag 1901–1929*, ed. by Gerhard Schuster (Frankfurt a.M.: Buchhändler-Vereinigung, 1985), p. 530: letter of 2 March 1915.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 526: letter of 19 February 1915.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 580: letter of 22 July 1915.

unacceptable to such as Kralik (who was both) and that the approval of Catholic circles was no longer necessarily denied him. Secondly, it reveals the tenacity with which Hofmannsthal carried through a cherished project and shows that he was prepared to make artistic compromises where he felt that these were necessary. In many senses this is a regrettable tendency: by putting his faith in sometimes simplistic notions of the *Volk* and of patriotic community of interest, Hofmannsthal tended to see affinities where there was no more than superficial resemblance. He was, for example, slow to realize that Anton Wildgans did not share his idealized image of Austria as place where the nationalities would co-exist harmoniously, instead insisting, like Kralik, on the hegemony of the German component.<sup>18</sup>

In 1894 the sense of continuity between past, present and future had inspired Hofmannsthal to the chilling thought that his shroud-clad ancestors were as much part of him as his own hair. During the War such continuities became more comforting, a matter of summoning up the living rather than the dead: 'Dem Geiste nach ist Prinz Eugen ein Lebender unter uns, seine Taten erneuern sich in diesen Kriegstaten unsres Geschlechts, und seine unverweslichen Gedanken sind das einzige politische Arkanum in einer ungewissen, zukunfts-schwangeren Gegenwart' (RA2 376). By allowing Eugen to speak in his own words in *Prinz Eugen: Aus seinen Briefen und Gesprächen* (the seventeenth volume of the Österreichische Bibliothek) Hofmannsthal heightened the immediacy of the historical figure but still could not present him as a flesh-and-blood person. Jedermann, by contrast, or the Beggar of *Das Salzburger große Welttheater*, could be the contemporary of the audience, not purely because these are representative figures, but also because they are part of a live theatrical experience, taking place in the public domain rather than being restricted to the private business of reading. As Stifter once wrote: 'Ganze Stöße von Büchern wirken nicht so, wie das [...] Einsaugen von allerlei Darstellungen menschlicher Handlungen, Empfindungen und dergleichen von Seite einer Menge von Menschen, die sich im gedrängten Zusammensein in der Aufnahme dieser Dinge noch wechselseitig steigern.'<sup>19</sup> In turning their attention to drama in the latter part of the War and immediately afterwards both

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<sup>18</sup> See Albert Berger, 'Lyrische Zurüstung der "Österreich"-Idee: Anton Wildgans und Hugo von Hofmannsthal', in *Österreich und der große Kreig 1914–1918*, pp. 144–52.

<sup>19</sup> Adalbert Stifter, 'Über Beziehung des Theaters zum Volke' (1867), *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. by Konrad Steffen, 14 vols (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1962–72), XIV, 446–53 (p. 449).

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Hofmannsthal and many advocates of Catholic amateur drama seemed to acknowledge the enormous power of this collective experience.

### *The Catholic 'Laienspiel' Movement*

There is no doubt that the feeling of being a nation at war created a new sense of solidarity at local and national level, an awareness of shared grief, shared hope and shared hardships that had not been known for many years. However, it also led to bitter recriminations against those individuals and institutions which were thought to be making an insufficient contribution to the war effort. Although plenty of rousing war poetry was produced, right-wing commentators were strongly critical of the theatrical establishment. Whereas Reinhardt was to argue that the wartime popularity of his theatres proved that people appreciated the opportunity to escape from their worries for an hour or two, Catholic conservatives such as Joseph Eberle were scathing about how little commercial repertoires had changed during the War. In a *Reichspost* article entitled 'Die große Welttragödie und das kleine Theaterspiel', he asked:

Wurde bei der allgemeinen Mobilmachung nicht auch das Theater mobil gemacht im Interesse der Reinigung, der Hebung, der Weckung des Volkswillens zum großen Kampf für die Heimat? Wurde nicht die Welt der Kunstschönheit herangezogen zur Unterstützung von Kanzel und Katheder, herangezogen zur Entflammung des Volkes für Kaiser und Vaterland, für Opferdienst und Seelenstärke? [...] Wurde nun auch im Theater jener Gott gepriesen, in dessen Kathedralen und Kirchen ein gramgebeugtes, ein hilfeheischendes Volk sich drängte? Wurden nun auf der Bühne die Heldengestalten der Geschichte lebendig, wurden die Heroen der Vergangenheit zu Sprechern und Führern der Gegenwart?<sup>20</sup>

Polemics of this kind confirmed Catholic disdain for the commercial theatre and helped to set an agenda for the *Laienspiel* movement. It was to be for and by the people, to foster patriotism and Christian thinking, and to reinforce solidarity by drawing on heroic images from the past.

This is, however, only one side of the story. In the years immediately following the First World War, the divisions between popular and high culture, between theatrical modernism and Catholic drama were not quite so clear-cut.

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<sup>20</sup> Joseph Eberle, 'Die große Welttragödie und das kleine Theaterspiel', reproduced in Eberle, *Schönere Zukunft: Kriegsaufsätze über Kultur und Wirtschaftsleben* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1916), pp. 111–28 (p. 121).

Both groups were overtaken by the desire to turn back the clocks and drew inspiration from theatrical forms which were part of the Christian tradition. Although some professional critics were as scathing about amateur drama as Eberle was about the commercial stage, there was significant overlap between the two, as mystery and morality plays enjoyed widespread popularity throughout Europe in the immediate postwar period: for example, the Church Drama Movement had considerable success in Britain; in France the work of Catholic dramatist Paul Claudel was widely admired, and Henri Ghéon made a name for himself with the troupe *Les Compagnons de Notre Dame*; and there were numerous revivals of religious drama in the German-speaking world, including those at Einsiedeln, Erl, Thiersee and Mariazell. In Austria the convergence between professionals and amateurs was due both to the work of specific individuals and to the common desire to redefine Austrian identity by forging a new link with the past. Bearing in mind these broader cultural trends, this section aims to explore what lies behind Yates's slightly dismissive remark that 'a whole school of Austrian morality plays' developed in the 1920s;<sup>21</sup> it will also show that, although Hofmannsthal's friend Max Mell played an important mediatory role, much of the inspiration within Vienna continued to come from the work of Richard von Kralik.

The most characteristic feature of the *Laienspiel* movement was that many young people became interested and involved in drama. As part of a generational reaction, first against a materialistic and militaristic society and later against the carnage of the First World War, they set out to find an alternative to the jaded institution of commercial theatre. The Berlin Calderón Society which, since its foundation in 1910, had made guest appearances all over the German-speaking world, offered one model and, especially in Germany, a further impulse came from within the professional theatre. In the summer of 1914 Gottfried Haas-Berkow, a teacher at the drama school attached to Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater, got together a group of Göttingen students and travelled around the country staging mystery plays, ancient and modern. As Kralik had discovered, such works lent themselves to open-air production and required only a bare minimum of costume and equipment.

The high standards achieved by this group and also in the Protestant *Lutherspiele* of Friedrich von Strom convinced many within the literary world who had previously been sceptical about amateur drama. One notable convert

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<sup>21</sup> Yates, *Schnitzler, Hofmannsthal, and the Austrian Theatre*, pp. 210–11.

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was the *Heimatkünstler* Friedrich Lienhard. Long before, in an essay entitled 'Sommerspiele' (1900), he had outlined plans to build a summer theatre in the Thuringian forest. Considering the question of an ensemble, he had taken issue with Wagner's belief that the people's innate love of theatre guarantees dramatic talent:

Die Anlage ist natürlich vorhanden. Aber wir sind in unserm Geschmack und in unseren Ansprüchen heute nicht mehr so leicht von bloßer Anlage und bloßem guten Willen zufrieden zu stellen; auf die Kanzel gehört ein gebildeter Theologe, [...] und auf die Bühne, die ein Kunstwerk darbietet, gehören nur in Ausnahmefällen, z.B. in religiös-nationalen Gemeindespielen, Dilettanten.

When this essay reappeared in the fifth edition of the collection *Neue Ideale* (1920), it carried the following footnote:

Inzwischen habe ich hierin nachsichtiger urteilen gelernt. Die Laienspiele des Lutherdarstellers Friedrich von Strom und die Mysterienspiele von Gottfried Haas-Berkow haben doch recht starke Wirkungen ausgeübt. Die Laienbühne hat noch — oder vielmehr: wieder — Zukunft.<sup>22</sup>

Others followed these examples, and the institution of the *Wandertruppe* returned to Germany and Austria. In the wake of the *Wandervogel* movement it appealed to young people as a means of furthering their education, a formative experience which announced to the world that they were independent of their parents and had views of their own. The message which the numerous troupes of young amateurs brought to the rural heartlands was predominantly Christian and *völkisch*. The foundation of the Berlin-based Deutscher Bühnenvolksbund in 1919 provided an organizational model, as well as publishing a supply of suitable texts and later a handbook for aspiring performers.<sup>23</sup> The Churches approved of amateur dramatics as a form of youth evangelism, a leisure activity which helped to instil Christian moral and cultural values into the younger generation and also helped to remind the general populace of their importance. Within the Catholic Church it also

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<sup>22</sup> Friedrich Lienhard, 'Sommerspiele', in Lienhard, *Neue Ideale nebst Vorherrschaft Berlins*, 5th edn (Stuttgart: Greiner & Pfeiffer, 1920), pp. 94–104 (p. 100).

<sup>23</sup> The *Taschenbuch für Laienspieler*, ed. by Richard Beidl (Berlin: Bühnenvolksbundverlag, 1928) gives a good idea of the sort of plays which were popular. For a sympathetic account of Catholic drama in the German-speaking countries between 1918 and 1934, see Wilhelm Spael, 'Das katholische Drama des deutschen Sprachgebiets', in *Katholische Leistung in der Weltliteratur der Gegenwart*, ed. anon. (Freiburg i.Br.: Herder, 1934), pp. 65–89.

became associated with the liturgical movement, which encouraged more active involvement of the laity as the basis of spiritual renewal.

In the period between approximately 1900 and 1938 Catholic organizations in Austria came to use amateur drama as a serious means of evangelism. Especially in Vienna, the development of the *Laienspiel* movement was closely tied in with the political situation, and the prominence of political Catholicism in public life at this time meant that (especially after 1933/34) the distinction between religious evangelism and political propaganda was inevitably somewhat unclear. Due to the intransigence of national and party groupings, parliamentary democracy in Austria had always been an aggressive business and, once a short-lived coalition between the main parties had been abandoned in 1920, the politics of the First Republic became an increasingly bitter struggle between competing and mutually exclusive *Weltanschauungen*. Catholic cultural activity in Vienna intensified because the Church faced strong competition from the Social Democratic party which controlled the city's administration from 1919 to 1934. The Social Democrats aimed not only to improve the lives of the workers in material terms but also to create 'a comprehensive proletarian counterculture' in which the provision of cultural and leisure activities played an important part.<sup>24</sup>

It is illustrative of the fundamentally divided nature of Austrian society at this time that, when the Socialist administration in Vienna wished in 1919 to broaden access to the theatre by reducing ticket prices for students and low-paid workers, it did so not by direct subsidy to the theatres but by supporting a number of separate *Kunststellen*. Although some, such as the *Kunststelle für öffentliche Angestellte*, were associated with a particular professional group, others were party based and promoted a programme of cultural activities in line with their particular ideology. This was particularly true of the two largest, the *Kunststelle der sozialistischen Arbeiterzentrale* and the *Kunststelle für christliche Volksbildung*, which was run by the *katholischer Volksbund*. In addition to the fact that each subsidized theatre tickets for concerts and productions on the professional stage of which it approved, the Catholic organization was committed to promoting the *Laienspiel* movement, and the Social Democrats staged Worker Olympics and mass festivals. Because few

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<sup>24</sup> See Helmut Gruber, *Red Vienna: Experiment in Working-Class Culture 1919–1934* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 5; see also pp. 81–113.

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other holidays were available, these frequently took place on Catholic feast days, thereby forcing workers to make a choice between party and Church.

Kralik had prepared the ground for a Catholic counter-offensive when he began to write for the Catholic youth group in Mariahilf in 1897. Within a few years there were Catholic Jugend- and Jünglingsvereine attached to churches in every district of the city, many of them keen to try their hand at acting. By 1914 Kralik and many others had produced works which were within their capabilities; the problem for clergy and youth workers was to identify those which were in line with the educational aims of their organizations. Catholic journals increasingly assisted in this: *Der Kunstgarten*, the organ of the Catholic *Kunststelle*, added a section headed 'Vereinskunst' to its format in December 1923, and the *Archiv für Praesides*, a clergy newsletter produced by the *katholischer Volksbund*, began as early as 1914 to produce a 'Ratgeber für die Vereinsbühne'. This not only gave brief plot summaries and details of technical demands, it also rated the plays according to how effectively they promoted religious, moral, or patriotic values (warning that some were 'zersetzend') and assessed their literary merits on a scale of one to four:

- 1 = literarisch wertvoll
- 2 = gutes Stück für die Vereinsbühne
- 3 = Durchschnittsware
- 4 = literarisches Machwerk<sup>25</sup>

This schema makes clear that the Catholic establishment did not encourage amateur groups to be artistically ambitious or to develop sophisticated literary tastes: their aim was *Volksbildung*. This is echoed in advice given in a magazine for Christian youngsters: 'Hüten wir uns, ein bloßer Theaterverein oder eine reine Spielschar zu werden. Wir haben noch andere Aufgaben.'<sup>26</sup>

Such warnings often fell on deaf ears: groups became so enthusiastic about acting that they lost sight of their original purpose and began to widen their repertoire, experimenting with Goethe and Schiller, or trying their hand at salon comedy and popular farce. This was basically what happened at Vienna's Schottengymnasium when, in 1922, the school revived its traditional *Schottenspiele*. Much of the inspiration for the venture came from Georg Terramare, a former pupil, who provided a folk nativity play, *Ein Spiel von der Geburt des*

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<sup>25</sup> Anon., 'Ratgeber für die Vereinsbühne', p. 2, supplement to *Archiv für Praesides*, 4 (1914).

<sup>26</sup> Ernst Görlich, 'Laienspiel und Dilettantentheater III', *Junges Leben: Monatsschrift der freien christlichen Jugend*, 24 (1929), 55–56 (p. 55).

*Herrn, den Hirten und den Königen* (1921), a *Totentanz*, and later an adaptation of the English *Everyman* play: within a few years the enthusiastic pupils had, however, branched out into Stucken's Neo-Romantic *Gawan*, Hofmannsthal's *Der Kaiser und die Hexe* and Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*. Official disapproval at the Benedictine-run school brought this development to an abrupt end, by which time Terramare had embarked on a directorial career in the professional theatre.<sup>27</sup>

In 1913 the Christlich-deutsche Volksbühne was founded in Vienna by Rudolf Sobotka and Kralik's close friend Adolf Innerkofler. According to its statutes, 'der Verein bezweckt die Bekanntmachung des christl. Volkes mit den Werken seiner Dichter, katholischen und deutscher Präganz. Er will vor allem dem Vereinstheater die Wege weisen, welche es, konsequent der Weltanschauung seiner Mitglieder und seines Publikums zu gehen hat'.<sup>28</sup> The Christlich-deutsche Volksbühne was basically a response to the two dangers of ideologically committed amateur drama: doctrinal non-conformism on the one hand and artistic ineptitude on the other. Sobotka and Innerkofler sought to establish a canon of approved works and to raise artistic standards by bringing together from all over the city those young performers who were most talented and most interested in drama. In this way it was hoped to win a larger audience and to silence those within the Catholic community who saw the dilettantism of the *Vereinsbühnen* as an embarrassment to the Church.<sup>29</sup> Unusually, this concession to professionalism did not mark the beginning of the end, most probably because the two men at the head of the organization harboured no professional ambitions and held tightly to its original ideals. This much is clear from an open letter which Sobotka produced in 1923, presumably for circulation to clergy and other supporters. A quotation from Kralik appears in the top right-hand corner and sets the tone: 'Wir wollen deutsch und christlich sein: / So mög die Kunst dem Volk gedeih'n.' Sobotka's justification of the group's activities relies on an archaic, idealized image of the 'Volk' and of its literary tastes; he uses the old argument that theatre should be a national institution serving an educational function rather than an entertainment establishment but distinguishes carefully between *Volksbildung* and the

<sup>27</sup> *Deutsch-Österreichische Literaturgeschichte*, IV, 1634.

<sup>28</sup> Statutes of the Christlich-deutsche Volksbühne, Vereinskataster, Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv.

<sup>29</sup> For a critical article on this see Anton Lübke, 'Das Vereinstheater', *Der Gral*, 16 (1921–22), 277–80.

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Enlightenment ideal of personal development: 'Die Bildung ist wesentlich national; gebildet wird der Mensch zur Individualität nur als Glied der Volksgemeinschaft.'<sup>30</sup> In the early 1920s notions of folk community were common currency, but the ideal of religious renewal through cultic theatre is clearly taken from Kralik.

The Christlich-deutsche Volksbühne proved to be a very durable organization and gave the Viennese *Laienspiel* movement a much-needed focus. In the 1920s it was able to establish sub-groups in a number of districts, and around 1925 one troupe, led by Rudolf Sobotka, started to call themselves 'Die Spielleute Gottes'. Their choice of name was probably a response to the founding of the socialist cabaret troupe 'Die Roten Spielleute'. Once described as 'die Evangelimänner der Gegenwart', the Spielleute Gottes boasted 2700 performances between 1925 and 1933.<sup>31</sup> Although the same plays were repeated in numerous locations, both indoors and out, performances retained a festival character because the Christlich-deutsche Volksbühne and Spielleute Gottes were *Wandertruppen* who played largely by invitation. Play bills in the Kralik archive show that they would contribute to the festivities on such occasions as the *Gründungsfeier* of a new Catholic organization or the anniversary of a priest's ordination and that they invariably helped the Catholic community to celebrate Kralik's birthday, something which it did with ever-increasing enthusiasm as he reached sixty-five, seventy, seventy-five, and eighty. Given that criteria additional to the conventional artistic ones inevitably come into play in judging a *Laienspiel*, it is extremely difficult to say whether these groups reached a particularly high standard. Although Innerkofler claimed in 1923 that the members of the Christlich-deutsche Volksbühne were 'längst über bloßen Dilettantismus hinaus', Hans Brečka wrote after watching them perform in the Theater in der Josefstadt that they were 'wohl auf einem guten Wege aber noch lange nicht am Ziel',<sup>32</sup> it does, however, reflect well on such groups that professional actors were increasingly willing to perform alongside them.

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<sup>30</sup> A copy of this letter is held in the Druckschriftensammlung of the Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek, E 70795. It consists of a single printed sheet and is undated but mentions the group's ten-year tradition.

<sup>31</sup> Karl B. Jindracek, 'Spielleute Gottes', *Wiener Zeitung*, 4 October 1933, p. 9.

<sup>32</sup> [Adolf] Innerkofler, 'Das Volksschauspiel vom Dr. Faust im Josefstädter Theater', *Reichspost*, 13 March 1923, pp. 5–6 (p. 5); B. [Hans Brečka], 'Theater in der Josefstadt', *Reichspost*, 20 March 1923, p. 7.

Although the Christlich-deutsche Volksbühne and the Spielleute Gottes concentrated their activities in Vienna, they regularly did short tours in the Austrian provinces. The poster with which the Spielleute Gottes announced their arrival to the local residents read thus:

Die Spielleute Gottes kommen! Sie nehmen die alte, christliche Übung wieder auf, die Geheimnisse des Glaubens im dramatischen Weihespiel zu veranschaulichen.

Ihr Spielsaal ist das Himmelszelt, ihr Obdach das Gotteshaus. Sie kommen und gehen wie die Vögel des Himmels.

Die Spielleute Gottes grüßen euch. Sie führen vor der hiesigen Kirche am .... auf das Weihespiel .... von ....

Werbet Freunde, kommt und seht. Hat euch das Spiel gefallen, bewahrt uns ein freundliches Gedenken. — Der Spielmeister.

The tone and appearance of this document (reproduced overleaf) are deliberately archaic; printed on a creamy parchment-like paper, the specimen held in the Kralik archive is written in a Gothic script with an illuminated initial letter. Inside the 'D' is a cross with light streaming out from behind it and a theatre mask hanging where one would normally expect to see the body of Christ. The art of performance is never to be separated from Christian discipleship or, less charitably, artistic standards are secondary to the religious message. That the mask hangs by threads passed through the eye-holes, hence giving it an agonized expression, also suggests, albeit unwittingly, a blindness to realities beyond the cross and God's light, both of which can be sensed without sight. The image projected by this poster is of a committed troupe who are the antithesis of professional actors. For an auditorium they have the whole of God's earth; the world theatre metaphor appears at its most literal and its most monumental. The comparison with the birds of the air suggests that, unlike professional actors, the troupe is not interested in material rewards but rely on God to provide for their needs. The emphasis on nature also implies that their love of acting, dedicated to revealing the mysteries of faith, is God-given and therefore part of the natural order.

The commitment and success of groups such as the Christlich-deutsche Volksbühne and the Spielleute Gottes was responsible for reviving Kralik's long-dormant interest in the theatre, and in later years he was proud to recall that he had adapted twenty-six of Calderón's *autos* for their repertoire. For many years he had argued that the ideal theatre programme should tie in with the successive festivals of the Church's year. It was a step towards this when in 1925 a production of *Die Andacht zur heiligen Messe*, a Calderón *auto*

**D**ie Spielleute Gottes kommen!  
 Sie nehmen die alte, christliche Übung  
 wieder auf, die Geheimnisse des  
 Glaubens im dramatischen Wehspiel  
 zu veranschaulichen. Ihr Spielsaal ist das  
 Himmelszelt, ihr Orchester das Gotteshaus. Sie kom-  
 men und gehen wie die Vögel des Himmels.  
 Die Spielleute Gottes grüßen Euch. Sie füh-  
 ren vor der hiesigen Kirche auf.  
**Das Wehspiel**

**VON**

Der Erwerb eines Theaterzettels um Groschen be-  
 rechtigt zum Eintritt. Derwucher 50 Groschen.

Werbet Freunde, kommt und seht, hat Euch das  
 Spiel gefallen, bewahrt uns ein freundliches Gedenken.  
 Der Spielmeister:

Verband kath. Schriftsteller u. Schriftstellerinnen  
 Oesterreichs  
 P. Adolf Innerhofer, geschäftsführender Obmann,  
 Wien, Paulanergasse Nr. 6.  
 Rudolf Sobotha, Sekretär.

Verein Volkstheaterhalle  
 Stiftshofmeister Dr. Petrus Kunter,  
 Präsident  
 Wien I. Rennasse 12  
 Josef Leb, Direktor

Poster used by the 'Spielleute Gottes'.  
 Courtesy of the Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek.

adapted by Kralik, was integrated into the Corpus Christi procession at Döbling (the northern suburb of Vienna in which Kralik lived), with the performance by the Christlich-deutsche Volksbühne taking place in costume on the steps of the Karmelitenkirche. On such an occasion the traditional distance between audience and performers disappears insofar as all are participating in a sacral act. Kralik's prologue, asking the spectators to pay attention 'andächtig, fromm und still', simply expects that they behave during the performance as they will in the church, a continuity that is reinforced when everyone sings the *Te Deum* together at the end of the play before processing into the nave for the solemn mass.<sup>33</sup>

The idea caught on. The following year the Verband katholischer Schriftsteller und Schriftstellerinnen Österreichs, which together with the Verein Volkslesehalle had supported the Christlich-deutsche Volksbühne for some years, organized a more extensive programme of Corpus Christi plays taking in a number of churches and religious sites around Vienna. There are reports of at least twelve performances in 1926 and more than twice that number in the following year, when they also introduced *Allerseelenspiele* and *Adventspiele*. Although the liberal press seems to have paid little attention, the *Reichspost* ran a column headed 'Wiener religiöse Freilichtsspiele' and allowed Sobotka and Innerkofler to write regular reports on their activities. The *Osterfestspiele*, inaugurated in 1928, were an even bigger undertaking. They began on 7 April, which in that year was Easter Saturday, and ran for eight weeks, ending on 3 June, Trinity Sunday. Ten different acting troupes were involved, together giving more than forty performances. On Easter Saturday a play was built into the procession at no less than ten churches. On Easter Sunday there were a further five performances, which immediately followed the celebration of mass. This basic pattern was maintained throughout the period.

An eye-witness account published in the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* by Beda Kleinschmidt, a member of the Franciscan order, captures the atmosphere of these performances and, albeit without mentioning the political situation, offers a few thoughts on their significance. A sympathetic tourist rather than the ideal spectator, Kleinschmidt arrives just as the church service is finishing. Immediately afterwards a herald in medieval costume signals with a piercing blast that the performance is about to begin. The play is not Hofmannsthal's

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<sup>33</sup> Kralik, *Neue Tage und neue Werke: Fortsetzung der Lebenserinnerungen* (Munich: Höfling, 1927), pp. 19–20.

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*Jedermann* but *Die Frauen am Grabe des Herrn* by Christine Anger-Nilius, the setting not the cathedral square in Salzburg but a meadow alongside a newly built church on the edge of the Vienna Prater.

Alles drängt sich auf die Sonnenseite des Kirchleins. Polizisten halten einen angemessenen Raum für die 'Spieleute Gottes' frei. Nicht mal ein Seil ist gespannt, um die Zuschauer zurückzuhalten. Da gibt's keine Bühne, keine Kulissen, keinen Souffleurkasten. In der Sakristei werden die leichten, bunten Tücher, die die Kostüme ausmachen, von den Spielteuten angelegt. Und schon erscheint als erste Hela Kosani, die Spielleiterin, um in schlichten Reimen den Inhalt des Spieles anzukündigen. Und nun das Spiel selbst.<sup>34</sup>

The play lasts twenty-five minutes, has only four speaking parts (Christ and the three women who visited his tomb) and is derived almost entirely from scriptural material. Kleinschmidt notes at the end that many members of the audience are visibly moved and concludes that the popularity of such plays must be making a positive contribution to the work of evangelism in the city. Unlike the large-scale dramatic projects planned by Christian groups elsewhere and, indeed, unlike the Salzburg Festival, these open-air performances were largely independent of the economic conditions. On its own terms, the formula of no profit-making, performance taking place directly before or after the church service and lasting no more than half an hour, no stage other than the steps of the church, and few actors, was very suitable to the postwar situation and ensured that their message reached sections of the population who had little contact with the professional theatre.

A glance at the repertoire of groups such as the Christlich-deutsche Volksbühne shows that it included many works of the kind which inspired or were directly taken up by the professional theatre. Their staples were, of course, Calderón and the ubiquitous nativity and passion plays. Almost two-thirds of the plays performed in the 1928 *Osterfestspiele* were Calderón *autos* which had been adapted by Kralik. Alongside these came Austrian *Volksstücke*, especially Raimund and Nestroy, and modern mystery plays by such writers as Sobotka and Innerkofler, Anton Dietzenschmidt, Franz Weinrich and Michael Klieba. Although the *Volksstück* enjoyed a modest revival in the professional theatre at this time, few Catholic dramatists found acceptance, not least because they tended to adopt a formulaic and overtly didactic approach. Reinhard Johannes Sorge, Leo Weismantel and Max Mell were, however, in

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<sup>34</sup> Beda Kleinschmidt O.F.M., 'Wiener Osterspiele', *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, 13 April 1928, p. 1.

a rather different category, insofar as the first two were claimed by the professionals as expressionists, by the amateurs as Catholic dramatists. Weismantel, who was a regular contributor to *Der Gral* and an advocate of Catholic *Volkstheater*, even won from the anti-Catholic Julius Bab grudging acknowledgement that he was 'nicht nur ein Mensch von geistiger Selbständigkeit, sondern sogar ein wirklicher Dichter, der Momente echter Vision und ursprüngliche musikalische Sprachkraft besitzt'.<sup>35</sup> Both sides could make what they wished of Sorge's work, since he had been killed in action in 1916 and was no longer there to defend it. *Der Bettler* (1912), first staged by Reinhardt in 1917, was both a product and a document of the generational revolt that had given birth to the *Laienspiel* movement insofar as its 'theatralische Sendung' advocated using the reformed theatre as an instrument of spiritual and cultural regeneration. The battle for Sorge was particularly hard-fought because he converted to Catholicism after the completion of *Der Bettler*; the symbols of eternity in which the hero of *Der Bettler* wishes to talk are not specifically Christian, whereas those of Sorge's subsequent plays, *Metanoëite* (1915) and *König David* (1916) are unmistakably so, a distinction which gave rise to heated debate as to whether his talent had developed or declined.<sup>36</sup>

The work of Max Mell is important because he, more than any other writer, bridged the gap between the *Laienspiel* movement and the literary establishment. Described by Max Pirker as 'der zwischen Wien und den Alpenländern kulturell bedeutsam vermittelnde Dichter', Mell introduced to the professional stage a form of religious mystery play which drew heavily on the folk traditions of the Catholic provinces, and provided the *Laienspiel* movement with original texts that had considerable literary merit.<sup>37</sup> A self-confessed conservative Catholic, later to mediate between Catholic and Nazi culture in Austria, he corresponded with Hofmannsthal from 1907 onwards and worked closely with him on the Österreichische Bibliothek project.<sup>38</sup> That he aroused

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<sup>35</sup> Julius Bab, *Die Chronik des deutschen Dramas: Fünfter Teil: Deutschlands dramatische Produktion 1919–1926* (Berlin: Oesterheld, 1926), p. 315. By contrast, Bab was damning about Dietzenschmidt, calling him 'eine Begabung merkwürdig pueriler Art', p. 312.

<sup>36</sup> A whole issue of *Der Gral*, 16, vii (April 1922) is devoted to Sorge and there are also favourable articles in *Hochland*, 15, i (1917–18), 712–16; 17, i (1919–20), 726–31.

<sup>37</sup> Max Pirker, 'Alpenländische Festspiele', *Der Kunstgarten*, 2 (1923–24), 81–86 (p. 81).

<sup>38</sup> Hugo von Hofmannsthal – Max Mell, *Briefwechsel 1907–1929*, ed. by Margret Dietrich and Heinz Kindermann (Heidelberg: Schneider, 1982). On Mell's sympathy with National Socialism see the following: Klaus Amann, *Der Anschluß österreichischer Schriftsteller an das Dritte Reich: Institutionelle und bewußtseinsgeschichtliche Aspekte* (Frankfurt a.M.: Athenäum, 1988), pp. 156–63; Karl Müller, *Zäsuren ohne Folgen: Das lange Leben der literarischen Antimoderne Österreichs seit*

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Hofmannsthal's interest in popular drama is evident from the fact that Mell's essay 'Hirtenspiel in Kärnten' appeared in the first edition of the *Neue Deutsche Beiträge*, alongside *Das Salzburger große Welttheater*. Mell may also have influenced Hofmannsthal's treatment of his Baroque model insofar as he believed that modern religious drama should engage with contemporary social problems. His short play *Das Wiener Kripperl von 1919* illustrates the point: in a *Stationendrama* with a difference God drives a tramcar and Gabriel collects the tickets; the passengers whom they pick up on Christmas Eve and take on an unexpected trip to Bethlehem are representatives of the defeated Austria, sad victims of war and poverty. Having established his method, Mell followed with a trilogy of festival plays, *Das Apostelspiel* (1923), *Das Schutzengelspiel* (1923), and *Das Nachfolge Christi-Spiel* (1927). Although it was Reinhardt who gave Mell his professional breakthrough, allowing him to stage *Das Apostelspiel* with a distinguished cast in the Theater in der Josefstadt in November 1924 and revive it at Salzburg in the following year, the play had its real premiere several months earlier, not in Vienna but in the Styrian town of Mariazell, where it was seen by visitors to Austria's most popular *Wallfahrtsort*. Furthermore, what Kindermann has called the 'adelige Einfachheit' of Mell's *Apostelspiel* also made it extremely popular with amateur performers, and the play was billed in the *Taschenbuch für Laienspieler* (1928) as 'eines unserer allerbesten Stücke'.<sup>39</sup>

Evidence of Mell's sympathy with the *Laienspiel* movement and of his desire to play the mediator is plentiful, not least in the articles he wrote between August 1918 and March 1922 as theatre critic of the newspaper *Wiener Mittag*. Reviewing a play entitled *Genesius* by the Catholic dramatist Ilse von Stach, he indeed wrote: 'Wird diesem Werk nun alles bereitet werden, daß es zur Wirkung kommt? Zu der Wirkung, für die wir heute alle doppelt und dreifach empfänglich sind? Wie geschaffen ist es zum Weihefestspiel. [...] Die Salzburger Festspielhausgemeinde müßte es sich sichern.'<sup>40</sup> That Mell

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den 30er Jahren (Salzburg: Otto Müller, 1990), pp. 287–302.

<sup>39</sup> Heinz Kindermann, 'Max Mell und das Burgtheater', in *Licht aus der Stille: Dank an Max Mell*, ed. by Isolde Emich (Munich and Vienna: Langen Müller, 1962), pp. 34–41 (p. 34); *Taschenbuch für Laienspieler*, p. 98. For a charming description of an amateur production of Mell's *Apostelspiel* see Paula Grogger, 'Spiel in der Ramsau', in *Licht aus der Stille*, pp. 42–44.

<sup>40</sup> 'Genesius', in 'Max Mell als Theaterkritiker', ed. by Margret Dietrich, *Sitzungsberichte der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Philosophisch-historische Klasse*, 413 (1983), pp. 179–80 (p. 180); 23 January 1920. Hermann Bahr also made favourable comments about the play in Bahr, *Kritik der Gegenwart: Tagebuch 1920* (Augsburg: Haas & Grabherr, 1922), pp. 6–8; and the final scene was reproduced in *Der Gral*, 13 (1918–19), 85–99.

was so taken with this play, a Catholic reworking of Lope de Vega's *Fingido Verdadero* and of Rotrou's *Saint Genest*, was understandable given that, not unlike his own *Apostelspiel*, it centres on the almost Schnitzleresque motif of an actor converted to Christianity after playing the part of a Christian. Other topics featured in Mell's column included 'Das Steyrer Kripperl', 'Das Traismaurer Krippenspiel', an 'Österreichisches Weihnachtsspiel' by the Catholic Josef Neumair, and 'Ein steirisches "Jedermann"-Spiel' — all amateur productions.<sup>41</sup>

Regardless of his enthusiasm for Catholic drama, Mell was pragmatic about how much the urban theatre (either amateur or professional) could take from the autochthonic tradition of the rural provinces. As this passage from his essay 'Passionsspiele in Steiermark' makes clear, the Viennese intellectual remains an outsider:

Hier, in weiten Landstrichen, ist die alte Übung wieder im Schwange, ein echter Teil des Volkes glaubt daran und hält daran als an seinem inneren Besitz fest, und uns, die wir aus der städtischen Bildung kommen, nötigt das Erleben einer solchen Darbietung, zu folgen und mit zu glauben.<sup>42</sup>

Although Josef Nadler was later to label Mell's work 'gläubiger Dorfbarock', he thought of himself more realistically as drawing on rather than continuing the folk tradition.<sup>43</sup> In 'Ein Wort zum Volksschauspiel' (1927/28) he wrote:

Solche Spiele für die Zwecke des heutigen Theaters zu 'erneuern', daran hätte ich aber nicht gedacht und ich meine, im Theater können diese Spiele, die nicht zur Unterhaltung aufgeführt, sondern als alter Brauch fortgeübt werden, nicht gedeihen. Was ich davon mitnahm war ein Glanz, der von ihnen ausging und in dem ich das wahrhaft Volkhafte sehe.<sup>44</sup>

With the exception of *Ein altes deutsches Weihnachtsspiel*, which Reinhardt asked him to rework for Salzburg, Mell's work for the theatre was never simply that of the *Redakteur*; rather, by writing original plays which had modern relevance, he supported that overt politicization of Catholic cultural activity which became increasingly evident in the interwar period.

<sup>41</sup> 'Max Mell als Theaterkritiker', pp. 168–69, 273–74, 275–76, 296–98.

<sup>42</sup> Max Mell, *Prosa, Dramen, Verse*, 4 vols (Munich: Langen Müller, 1962), IV, 86–99 (p. 98).

<sup>43</sup> Nadler, *Literatur des deutschen Volkes*, IV, 455.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Christoph Heinrich Binder, *Max Mell: Beiträge zu seinem Leben und Werk*, Arbeiten aus der Steiermärkischen Landesbibliothek, 16 (Graz: Steiermärkische Landesregierung, 1978), p. 52.

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In conclusion, what is the importance of Catholic amateur drama in Austria? Firstly, it responded to an obvious social and spiritual need, reaching large sections of the population which had little access to professional theatre, and was therefore an important parallel development to the Salzburg Festival. Secondly, by fostering a sense of national, regional and local community it contributed to the process of cultural self-definition which was a preoccupation of the First Austrian Republic. Because the *Laienspiel* was distinct from the entertainment industry, it did not need to reach high artistic standards or court journalistic approval in order to fulfil its social and religious objectives. In Vienna the *Laienspiel* movement was part of the Church's response to the threat of proletarian culture; elsewhere it rode on a wave of nostalgia and cultural conservatism that Josef Nadler summed up thus:

Es [das Laienspiel] ist ein Mittel, den Menschen wieder zu natürlichen Gemeinschaften zurückzuführen, seine gemeinsame Arbeit mit dem Glanz verinnerlichter gemeinsamer Feste zu verklären, sein Innenleben aus der schmerzhaft zerfaserten und zerschleiften Zerstreuung auf einfache, ruhige, gesammelte Linien zu binden. Nicht zuletzt ein Mittel, um zu unserer Vergangenheit zurückzukehren, hinter den Kreuzweg, der uns irreführte, um noch einmal den rechten Weg zu suchen und zu beschreiten.<sup>45</sup>

The pathos of Nadler's references to community betrays the ease with which theatrical forms derived from Christian cultic drama could be used to promote a *völkisch* and potentially also a National Socialist agenda. The appeal to emotion rather than intellect, the rejection of irony and satire, and the emphasis on simplicity of message and characterization all helped to make the *Laienspiel*, as Julius Bab remarked, a 'Zurückentwicklung' in terms of modernist literary history; but, as the next chapter will show, the forces responsible for its emergence were also operative in the professional theatre and did not necessarily lead to a decline in artistic merit.<sup>46</sup>

### *Richard von Kralik: An Assessment*

In reconstructing the history of Catholic drama in which Hofmannsthal's festival plays form important landmarks it has been necessary to look far

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<sup>45</sup> Josef Nadler, 'Laienspiele', *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, 21/22 May 1921, pp. 1–2; 27 May 1921, p. 1 (27 May 1921, p. 1).

<sup>46</sup> Bab, *Die Chronik des Deutschen Dramas: Fünfter Teil*, p. 316.

beyond the familiar canon of Austrian literature, and Kralik's name has appeared constantly. This study would therefore be incomplete without an assessment of his impact on Austrian cultural life and of the literary value of his dramatic works. In order to do justice to a writer described in 1893 as 'eine der merkwürdigsten Gestalten der Wiener Literatur, ja der ganzen zeitgenössischen Literatur in Deutschland überhaupt', frequently calumniated in the liberal and socialist press, but lionized within the Catholic milieu, it must ignore neither the idiosyncrasies of his vision nor its undeniable appeal for many Austrians.<sup>47</sup>

Since assessments of Kralik's importance vary so much, it is instructive to begin by looking at the most positive view, namely his own, and then work through to a more balanced and objective evaluation. Kralik, like many of his generation, was influenced by Langbehn's *Rembrandt als Erzieher* and believed in the artistic personality as a powerful agent of cultural change. The difference was that he did not consider the proposition historically or theoretically but in relation to his own image. From an early stage in his career, Kralik seems to have had an exaggerated sense of his importance as a literary personality. Indeed, Doppler goes so far as to suggest that Kralik's entire literary activity can be interpreted as 'angestrenzte Arbeit an der Herstellung und Einordnung des Ichs'.<sup>48</sup> Certainly, Kralik had megalomaniac tendencies which were exacerbated by his involvement in the *katholischer Literaturstreit*: he was more anxious to find a publisher for his complete works (only two of the forty-five volumes planned in 1907 appeared) than to see Catholic presses producing cheap editions of the classics, as Muth had hoped they would; and it became a habit for him to defend the distinct character and artistic superiority of Catholic literature by stressing his own literary achievements, and those of the *Gralbund*, in the strongest possible terms. The introductory section of *Die katholische Literaturbewegung der Gegenwart* (1909), for example, not only gives the reader an outline of Kralik's biography but also claims that the Leo-Gesellschaft productions were the beginning of a glorious literary revolution, which would have borne fruit, had there not been

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<sup>47</sup> Anon., *Neues Wiener Abendblatt*, 24 July 1893, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> Doppler, "Ich habe diesen Krieg immer sozusagen als meinen Krieg angesehen", p. 96. Unfortunately, this article is more successful in demonstrating Kralik's eccentricity than his importance.

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dissent within the society: 'Was Äschylos, Homer, Pindar unserer Kultur vorgestellt hatten, das schien wieder der Erfüllung nahe.'<sup>49</sup>

In his own mind at least, Kralik seems to have become the national poet of a unified Catholic Austria, a conviction which came to govern his literary activities. He felt that he had a duty to keep his people in touch with their cultural heritage and with their history. In order to achieve the former he not only reworked traditional forms of religious drama but also produced a six-volume *Deutsche Götter- und Heldenbuch* (1900–03) and wrote numerous articles on cultural subjects; as far as reminding people of their history was concerned, historical drama was one method, writing history was another. Kralik believed that all historiography was necessarily subjective and made his own contribution to the field unashamedly so. Rejecting nineteenth-century notions of history as a secular, scientific discipline, he thought that one should always relate events and movements in the past to what was desirable in the present, and thereby demonstrate that a meaningful and organic process of divinely ordained development was taking place.<sup>50</sup> His history of world philosophy, *Weltweisheit* (1894–96), was written in accordance with this principle. It demonstrates, in a nutshell, that all philosophy was leading up to the idea of life as theatre as Kralik formulated it. It had gone via Plato, Calderón, Shakespeare, Schiller's 'Spieltrieb', and many more besides, but he, Kralik, was the latest (and implicitly greatest) link in the chain. It is a measure of this intellectual arrogance that in one planned series of history plays, which was to cover everything of major importance from Charlemagne and the glorious days of the Holy Roman Empire to the death of Pope Pius IX, Kralik intended to make a personal appearance in the very last play.<sup>51</sup>

Anticipating that upsurge of interest in local history and local cultural history which was to be a reaction to the break-up of the Habsburg Empire, Kralik turned his attention to specifically Austrian history in the years leading up to the First World War, producing volumes both on Vienna and on the country as a whole. In 1908 he completed his only major dramatic project of this period, a cycle of seven historical dramas with the title *Die Revolution*. The desire to offer a critical interpretation of the social and political upheavals

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<sup>49</sup> Kralik, *Die katholische Literaturbewegung der Gegenwart*, p. 22.

<sup>50</sup> On Kralik's historiography see Wolfgang Pirkel, 'Weltgeschichte als Weltanschauung: Zur Rolle der katholischen Geschichtsschreibung am Beispiel Richard von Kraliks', in *Verantwortung, Wissenschaft, Forschung*, Festgabe zum 20 jährigen Bestehen des Internationalen Forschungszentrums in Salzburg, ed. by Marian Heitger (Vienna, Freiburg i.Br. and Basel: Herder, 1981), pp. 164–74.

<sup>51</sup> Kralik, *Tage und Werke*, p. 70.

that had ushered in the nineteenth century, and in particular of the French Revolution, was felt by several turn-of-the-century writers — witness Schnitzler's *Der grüne Kakadu* (1899) and Delle Grazie's dramatic epic *Robespierre* (1894). Kralik took the view that the Revolution and the individualist culture to which it gave birth were historical aberrations, erratic blocks in the world's otherwise organic development, and could only be removed if there were a mass return to traditional Catholicism.

The *Revolution* heptalogy was not written for the contemporary stage but as an essential part of the complete theatre repertoire which Kralik intended to leave for posterity. The seven plays, which aim to cover all major events from 1790 to 1815 and range freely across Europe, are what Lindenberger terms 'panoramic drama' and have many of the difficulties which he associates with that typically nineteenth-century form.<sup>52</sup> Firstly, they are a phantasmagorical mix of myth, history and pure make-believe, typifying Kralik's refusal to distinguish between *Geschichte* and *Heilsgeschichte* (secular and sacred history). Secondly, the emphasis in *Die Revolution* is firmly on the processes of monumental history and the cosmic forces at work behind them. Each individual play begins with an allegorical 'Vorspiel' and ends with an epilogue which is usually set in heaven; the battle of Waterloo, which forms the climax of the last play, is preceded by a 'Walpurgisnacht' in which a large collection of mythical and allegorical figures discuss the importance of what is about to happen.

Although many famous names pass across the stage of *Die Revolution*, not only soldiers and statesmen but also Haydn, Beethoven, Mozart, Schubert, Goethe, Grillparzer, Brentano, and Friedrich Schlegel, Kralik's prophetic vision leaves little room for individuals to influence the course of history in the manner of Schiller's *Wallenstein*. Instead, the impression is of puppets whose movements are controlled by an unseen hand. The danger of this technique is of course that, without the tension between individual free will and the forces of history which informs such a play as Büchner's *Dantons Tod*, all that remains is an impression of the grandeur of historical processes, as evoked by Hegel, and occasional scenes which are memorable for the supreme theatricality of their visual or musical effect. *Die Revolution* suffers from this and in places little short of parody. In the fourth play, 'Drei Kaiser', Kralik feels obliged to include Goethe's famous meeting with Napoleon but uses it

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<sup>52</sup> Lindenberger, *Historical Drama*, pp. 86–94.

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almost exclusively to reflect on his own approach. Predictably, the idea of history as theatre is to the fore. Napoleon suggests that Goethe should write a play about recent events and muses on the words that a later dramatist might put into his mouth. Goethe answers: 'Wenn er seinen Vorteil versteht, so wird er Sie nur Ihre eigenen Worte sagen lassen. Denn wenn auch die Poesie über die Geschichte steht, so wird doch der Dichter am besten tun, das Sprachrohr der Wirklichkeit zu werden.'<sup>53</sup> This claim to present the unvarnished truth in the manner of the annalist seems somewhat peculiar, given that other scenes bring Goethe face to face with several of his creations, including Hermann and Dorothea, Eduard from *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, and Wilhelm Meister.

Given Kralik's tendency to self-parody which, although unintentional, compounds the normal difficulties of panoramic drama, it is amazing that *Die Revolution*, which Kralik viewed as an improvement on Shakespeare's histories, did not sink completely without trace. Here, as always, there were people who took Kralik's work seriously. Favourable reviews came not only from the Catholic press but also from the Pan-German camp: Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn, director of the ill-fated 'Aryan theatre', called *Die Revolution* 'ein dichterisch-historisches Handbuch der Revolution für den Hausgebrauch', and Max Millenkovich-Morold, who was briefly to promote a programme of 'germanization' as director of the Burgtheater, saw a debt to Raimund and the *Volksstück* tradition in 'das Traumhafte der poetischen Darstellung und das absichtlich Primitive der theatralischen Technik'. He concluded his review: 'Kralik hat uns immer als bedeutender Dichter und Denker gegolten. Seine Heptalogie ist künstlerisch wohl das Reifste und Bedeutendste, was er uns bisher geschenkt hat.'<sup>54</sup>

Although the *Revolution* cycle was never staged in its entirety, the loose episodic structure of the plays and broadly independent character of individual scenes made it possible to mount them singly. Kralik's collection of press-cuttings shows that Catholic *Vereine* frequently did so in the decade between its publication and 1918. A favourite was the positively jingoistic 'Haydns Tod' which is set at the fall of Vienna in 1809 and ends as the composer plays his most famous composition, the Austrian national anthem, and then sinks down dead. *Die Revolution* made the news in 1913 when a number of Catholic organizations staged sections of it to celebrate the centenary of the Battle of

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<sup>53</sup> Kralik, *Die Revolution: Sieben Historien* (Ravensburg: Alber, 1908), p. 339.

<sup>54</sup> Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn, 'Die Revolution', *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 11 January 1909; Max Morold, 'Die Revolution', *Wiener Abendpost*, Beilage zur Wiener Zeitung, 27 January 1909, pp. 3–4.

Leipzig. Indeed, in reporting the furore caused by Gerhart Hauptmann's *Festspiel in deutschen Reimen* (1913), also written for this purpose and staged by Reinhardt in Breslau, the *Oberschlesische Zeitung* suggested, and the *Reichspost* emphatically agreed, that Kralik's more patriotic work would have been a better choice.<sup>55</sup>

By writing plays as self-indulgent as *Die Revolution* and making extravagant claims about their literary value, Kralik invited the world to investigate more closely. In early issues of *Der Gral*, Kralik and his associates taunted the critics of Catholic literature that they only assumed its inferiority because they knew nothing about it.<sup>56</sup> Muth finally swallowed the bait and devoted the penultimate chapter of *Die Wiedergeburt der Dichtung aus dem religiösen Erlebnis* (1909) to the members of the *Gralbund*. Although this pamphlet is part of the *Literaturstreit* polemic, Muth does make some perceptive comments. His main criticism of Kralik is that he is first and foremost a philosopher and that his dramatic works suffer from being the products of a philosophical rather than a poetic imagination. He correctly identifies the topos of life as theatre as the point around which Kralik's intellectual universe revolves and thus implies that his religious faith is perhaps a little suspect, that he is perhaps more attached to this private mythology. Clearly there is evidence to support these assertions: variations on the *theatrum mundi* appear with almost tiresome regularity in Kralik's dramatic works and tend to be treated as givens rather than as poetic images which grow out of a particular situation. Muth writes off Kralik's poetry as embarrassingly inept and describes the handful of dramas to which he is prepared to be at all charitable as derivative to the point of plagiarism. As the title *Die Wiedergeburt der Dichtung aus dem religiösen Erlebnis* suggests, Muth's central argument is that a Catholic writer should put something of his personal experience of faith into his characters rather than using them as mouthpieces for ready-made ideas. Kralik's unchanging and dogmatic ideology, expressed in a limited range of literary forms, and his consistent refusal to probe individual psychology are the absolute antithesis of this. There is no doubt that his dramatic works suffer, insofar as they become formulaic, on occasion practically to the point of mannerism.

Muth singles out the early historical drama *Maximilian* (1885) but does not use his example as fully as he might. His first move is to damn it with faint

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<sup>55</sup> Anon., 'Die Katholiken und das Breslauer Festspiel', *Oberschlesische Zeitung*, 6 July 1913, pp. 1-2; anon., 'Ein anderes Jahrhundertfeierfestspiel', *Reichspost*, 23 July 1913, p. 6.

<sup>56</sup> See Kralik, 'Zeichen des Weges', *Der Gral*, 1 (1906-07), 176-80 (pp. 179-80).

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praise: it ought to work well on the modern stage, but that is only because of its nationalistic subject matter and because audiences are not as fussy as they once were. Muth then makes the valid criticism that *Maximilian*, intended as an improvement on *Götz von Berlichingen*, owes a considerable debt to Hans Sachs, to *Egmont*, to *Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg* and to Calderón. With *Maximilian* Muth misses a golden opportunity to demonstrate his thesis that Kralik's drama is idiosyncratic philosophy unimaginatively put on stage. The imprisoned Maximilian does indeed recall Egmont, and the tone of the Abbot's monologue, placed at the very centre of the play, does indeed echo *Faust*, but its content is pure Kralik. The abbot is a mouthpiece for his creator, a man who is confident that he has found the world's secret: evil and suffering are purely 'Ein Schein, ein Wahn, ein Reiz, ein Scherz, ein Spiel'. He concludes in typical Kralik fashion:

So ist's, und ewig bin ich mein gewiß.  
Mir ist, als ob ein Schleier mir zerriß  
Und zwischen Erd und Himmel aufgebaut  
Ein göttlich Schauspiel ich bewundernd schaut.<sup>57</sup>

As if this is not sufficient evidence of Kralik's repetitive and derivative style, *Maximilian* is prefaced by a 'Vorspiel auf dem Theater' that combines Goethe's *Faust* with Calderón's *El gran teatro del mundo*. Director, poet and clown discuss the scarcity of new plays, and the poet, a projection of Kralik's refusal to seek public approval, anticipates the plot of his latest creation 'Maximilian'. Like Goethe in his dedication, the poet addresses his spirit muse, this time Ostara the goddess of dawn, and she promptly appears together with other spirits. Since they know that all the world is a stage anyway, the spirits are taken aback by the prospect of staging a play within a play, as it were, but go along with the idea, just for fun. The poet and Ostara take on the leading roles; the rest are to be divided amongst the spirits, as in *El gran teatro del mundo*.

Regardless of its lack of originality, an abridged version of *Maximilian* was re-issued in 1913. The new title, *Der letzte Ritter*, is even more direct in inviting comparison with *Götz von Berlichingen*. *Der letzte Ritter* was staged at Vienna's Bürgertheater (a privately owned theatre, with no connection to the Burgtheater) as part of the celebrations for Kralik's sixtieth birthday. The

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<sup>57</sup> Kralik, *Maximilian* (Vienna: Konegen, 1885), p. 86.

afternoon performances, billed as *Festmatinees*, were a breakthrough insofar as this was the first time Catholic organizations had persuaded a professional theatre and professional actors to stage Kralik's work. The mere fact that it was financially viable to do so indicates Kralik's standing in the immediate prewar period and shows that his dramatic works found a sizeable audience within Vienna's Catholic community. Indeed, such ventures became more frequent in the interwar period, when the Catholic *Kunststelle* was able to use some of its resources for that purpose.

The greatest difficulty in examining the literary value and theatrical effectiveness of Kralik's dramatic works is that in his lifetime they were rarely allowed to stand or fall by their own merits. Two occasions on which this did happen therefore warrant closer attention. The first is a production of Kralik's *Weihnachtsspiel*, staged at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus in December 1906. This is mentioned with approval in *Der Gral* and in Kralik's autobiography; reviews sent to him by the director Emil Geyer fill in the missing details. Whereas the Leo-Gesellschaft production had been attended by some of Vienna's most prominent citizens, this time the *Weihnachtsspiel* was intended for children. Kralik's play (which must have been severely abridged) filled the first half of a two-hour programme; the second half was taken up by a version of *Rotkäppchen*! Thanks to its companion piece, the Christmas story appears as a fairytale requiring a child's sense of the miraculous. The production itself highlighted the underlying element of kitsch in Kralik's text and the sentimentality of its appeal. That in the Leo-Gesellschaft version the archangel Gabriel was played by the beautiful Stella Hohenfels rather than a male actor already pointed in that direction; Geyer went further, casting children as the angels. Not surprisingly, they stole the show: 'Die Engelsflügel waren denen angeheftet, die sich am artigsten damit ausnehmen: Kindern, in langen weißen Hemden. Diese liebenswürdigen Wesen guckten zur Tür und Fenster hinein, saßen im Schnee und unter den Tannen...'.<sup>58</sup> This production also employed the latest innovation in design, namely the revolving stage. In making the journey to Bethlehem call attention to itself as a novel aesthetic experience, Geyer demonstrated that works such as Kralik's *Weihnachtsspiel* had to make concessions to modern taste, if they were to be effective. As Reinhardt had discovered, twentieth-century theatre-goers did still possess the naive theatrical

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<sup>58</sup> Richard Elchinger, 'Weihnachtsspiele', *Die Schaubühne*, 3 (1906–07), 58–59 (p. 58).

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imagination of children at play, but needed the assistance of extravagant, self-conscious theatricality if they were to rediscover it.

The second of Kralik's plays that was staged professionally and without his name being writ large was *Das Volksschauspiel vom Doktor Faust* (1895) which was performed at the Akademietheater in 1920 and four years later at the Schönbrunner Schlosstheater. The Schönbrunn production was staged by Burgtheater director Franz Herterich as part of the 'Musik- und Theaterfest der Stadt Wien', while in 1920 the director Attilio Bleibtreu had incorporated his adaptation of Kralik's text into a cycle of 'Faust' plays that also included Lenau's *Faust* and the *Urfaust*, discovered in 1887. On both occasions the key roles were played by well-known Burgtheater actors. Clearly, much of the interest lay in comparing Goethe's *Faust* with other versions of the legend. Kralik's play not only replaces Goethe's urbane, ironic devil, who knows himself to be an anachronism in the modern world, with the unsophisticated humour of the *Volkstück* but also ousts Goethe's theatricalized image of the *theatrum mundi*. Instead, his *Doktor Faust* is steeped in the atmosphere of the Counter-Reformation, so that neither perseverance, regret nor good intentions is sufficient to save his Faust from the jaws of hell. In treating Kralik's play as an exercise in literary archaeology, the theatre establishment effectively disregarded the fact that he had intended it to repair the damage done by Goethe to Germany's Catholic folk heritage; but, by playing down its tendentiousness, Bleibtreu and Herterich brought Kralik's play to a public which it would not otherwise have reached.

As the 1920 and 1924 productions were both reviewed by the major newspapers, it is possible to assess the extent to which Kralik's notion of a *Volkstück* appealed to a twentieth-century audience. Raoul Auernheimer in the *Neue Freie Presse* took the view that it pleased no one since it had neither the intellectual bite to occupy people like him nor the earthy humour which a less educated person would expect of the genre. Kralik's text is indeed thoroughly cleansed of eroticism and ribald humour, both in his characterization of Mephistopheles and in the behaviour of Hans Wurst who, rather than heightening Faust's tragedy, parodies it in a manner that is best described as puerile. His humour relies heavily on puns and malapropisms; and he outlives his master thanks to a combination of native wit and sheer stupidity. Interestingly, one commentator did, however, remark that, if Kralik's *Volksschauspiel* were to be revived 'samt aller Zaubermaschinerie und den lustigen Figuren', then it could be a colourful evening's entertainment akin to

Reinhardt's production of *Das Mirakel*.<sup>59</sup> To any modern reader who has seen Mickey Mouse as the Sorcerer's Apprentice in Disney's *Fantasia*, Hans Wurst has considerable theatrical potential of this kind when he accidentally tries his hand at conjuring. The point behind this analogy is that, given a director with a rich theatrical imagination and a healthy disrespect for the Catholic seriousness of Kralik's work, it would be possible to transform it into a theatrical extravaganza. The *Weihnachtsspiel* and the *Volksschauspiel vom Doktor Faust* are particularly suited to this treatment because both deal with familiar and yet fantastical material and make few intellectual demands; the director can use them as frameworks around which to weave elaborate theatrical fantasies. For a man of Kralik's ideals this would, however, have been little consolation.

There is an element of cultural snobbery in Auernheimer's disdain for the unliterary nature of Kralik's play; he opens his review with the condescending remark that the *Volksschauspiel* is out of place amidst the gilded Baroque splendour of Schönbrunn but might be reasonably effective 'vor einem im vorhinein vergnügten Publikum', perhaps in a 'Jahrmarktstheater'.<sup>60</sup> The *Reichspost* agreed that the first night had not been an unqualified success but blamed the poor taste of the audience:

Daß es gestern dem verwunderten Unverständnis des Schönbrunner Premierenpublikums begegnete, daß sich in den unvergleichlich humorvollen Hans-Wurst-Szenen auf die aufflackernde Heiterkeit der empfänglichen Zuschauer die frostige Blasiertheit der anderen legte, dies ist bei weitem kein Beweis gegen das Stück und soll uns die Freude an dem gelungenen Abend nicht verderben.<sup>61</sup>

The notes appended to the second edition of *Das Volksschauspiel vom Doktor Faust*, published in 1927, testify to the play's popularity with Catholic amateur groups. Their author, Rudolf Sobotka, who was a great admirer of Kralik's work, tells that he alone has directed fifteen productions of the play, and there is evidence of many more in Kralik's collection of press-cuttings. This seems to suggest that, even in the 1920s, certain sections of the Catholic population did not set their cultural sights much above the 'Jahrmarktstheater' of which Auernheimer was so disdainful. The less educated classes, who made up most

<sup>59</sup> drag., 'Wochenschau auf Wiener Bühnen', *Neues Montagsblatt*, 15 March 1920, p. 4.

<sup>60</sup> R.A. [Raoul Auernheimer], 'Schönbrunner Schloßtheater', *Neue Freie Presse*, 17 October 1924, pp. 6–7 (p. 6).

<sup>61</sup> B. [Hans Brečka], 'Das Wiener Musik- und Theaterfest', *Reichspost*, 17 October 1924, p. 6.

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of the Catholic lay organizations, had scant knowledge of the German classics; they demanded no more of the theatre than what Kralik was able to provide and much preferred that to the more intellectual and international fare on offer, at a price many could still not afford, in the professional theatres. This helps to explain in pragmatic terms why Kralik was wise to keep Catholic and liberal culture apart once he had shifted his attention from the middle to the lower classes: had he blended the two, he might have had no audience at all.

The fortunes of the *Weihnachtsspiel* and the *Volksschauspiel vom Doktor Faust* suggest that Kralik's dramatic work was most successful in the professional theatre when it was not stridently Catholic but in the lighter, sentimental or *völkisch* vein. Although Horváth, Brecht and others had begun to produce 'kritische Volksstücke' in the interwar period, more traditional forms also enjoyed a revival, both for reasons of escapism and nostalgia (Jarka dismisses them as 'harmloses Amusement mit optimistischer Grundhaltung'),<sup>62</sup> and because the genre could be used to promote a range of *völkisch* ideologies. Kralik's greatest triumph in the professional theatre indeed came in 1927 when the Klub der alten Wiener offered a prize for the best new *Volksstück*. Kralik entered anonymously with the peculiarly titled *Zarathustra Blaubart und der liebe Augustin* and won, despite competition from more than eighty other entries. In addition to a sum of money (1000 Gulden), part of the prize was a promise of performance at the Burgtheater or one of its subsidiaries. This was fulfilled when the play was staged at the Akademietheater in September 1933, coinciding with the 'allgemeiner deutscher Katholikentag', which was held in Vienna that year. For Kralik's supporters this was a significant victory, insofar as it was the first time that Vienna's representative theatre had accepted Kralik's work under his own name.<sup>63</sup>

Set just after the Turkish Wars, Kralik's play fuses the magician Zarathustra with the wife-murderer Bluebeard and brings him to Vienna where he takes Zelinde, the daughter of a temporarily impoverished noble family, as his seventh wife. Unable to suppress her curiosity, she enters the one room in his

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<sup>62</sup> Horst Jarka, 'Zur Literatur- und Theaterpolitik im "Ständestaat"', in *Aufbruch und Untergang: Österreichische Kultur zwischen 1918 und 1938*, ed. by Franz Kadmoska (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1981), pp. 499–538 (p. 517).

<sup>63</sup> On Catholic attitudes towards the Burgtheater, see Bernhard Doppler, 'Die Opposition der Katholiken gegen das Burgtheater', in *Die einen raus — die anderen rein: Kanon und Literatur: Vorüberlegungen zu einer Literaturgeschichte Österreichs*, ed. by Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, Johann Sonnleitner and Klaus Zeyringer, *Philologische Studien und Quellen*, 128 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1994), pp. 112–25.

castle to which access has been denied her and discovers her six predecessors. Only the combined efforts of her family and Bluebeard's Viennese servant Augustin save her from sharing their gruesome fate, and the play ends as family friend Pater Abraham (a cross between Bruder Martin from Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* and Abraham a Santa Clara) sends Zarathustra away to repent of his sins. The play has many features typical of the *Volksstück* tradition. Bluebeard's castle, supposedly erected by magical means, provides a showcase for the stage-designer's art, and the third act has that bizarre sensationalism which was especially common in the *Zauberstücke* of the late eighteenth century: Zelinde's predecessors, a row of puppet-like figures who are condemned by Bluebeard's magic to hang in limbo between life and death, leave their accustomed places to begin a grotesque song-and-dance routine, as they always do on moonlit nights. There is also a strong element of local colour in Kralik's play as the wiles of the foreigner are contrasted with Augustin's homely wisdom, ladled out to the audience in a series of inserted songs, the last of which predictably ends 'und Wien bleibt Wien!'<sup>64</sup>

Kralik's play has limited literary merit (and makes one wonder about the general standard of entries), but most reviews of *Zarathustra Blaubart* were favourable, with the *Reichspost* declaring that it showed 'wie echtes dramatisches Blut in Kraliks Bühnendichtungen pulsiert, welche köstliche Mischung von Tiefsinn und Humor darin zu finden ist, welches Wissen der Vielwisser Kralik auch um die Gesetze der Bühne und ihre Wirkung besitzt'.<sup>65</sup> Although David Josef Bach of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* was convinced that the 'Volk' for which the play was written had long ceased to exist, others felt that, despite being essentially a *Puppenspiel*, it did still have nostalgic appeal.<sup>66</sup> According to Erwin Rainalter: 'Ein Wahlspruch ist darüber geschrieben: daß der Wiener Humor alles Böse überwindet. Und das ist eine Weisheit, wie sie der Wiener gern hört und zu allen Zeiten gern hörte, wenn er ins Theater ging.'<sup>67</sup> Although the *Reichspost* suggested that Augustin and the magician were meant to represent the contrast between simple Austrian common sense and the false

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<sup>64</sup> The text of *Zarathustra Blaubart und der liebe Augustin* was reproduced in the *Mitteilungen der Kralik-Gesellschaft* (May 1968), pp. 3–27.

<sup>65</sup> B. [Hans Brečka], 'Zarathustra Blaubart und der liebe Augustin', *Reichspost*, 14 September 1933, p. 9.

<sup>66</sup> D.B. [David Josef Bach], 'Puppentheater und Schaubühne', *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 18 September 1933, p. 3.

<sup>67</sup> E.H.R. [Erwin H. Rainalter], 'Akademietheater', *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 14 September 1933, p. 9.

ideals of the Nietzschean *Übermensch* (a similar contrast to that which forms the basis of *Das Volksschauspiel vom Doktor Faust*), no commentator admitted to finding a more precise political message in the play.<sup>68</sup> This is surprising in retrospect, as it can readily be interpreted as a metaphor for Austrian attitudes towards the Anschluss issue. Attracted to her husband by 'die Poesie, das Märchenhafte', Zeline convinces herself that his ugliness is only skin deep and gives in, as many Austrians were ready to, because of economic considerations: 'und schließlich wäre der Reichtum auch nicht ganz zu verachten in unserer bettelhaften Lage'.<sup>69</sup> According to the magician their union is legitimized by myth, the gods having created 'Doppelwesen' but then scattered the parts in different countries because the race became too arrogant; only a relationship such as theirs will bring redemption by restoring the wholeness of their original state. However, the play strikes an unmistakable warning note as Bluebeard tells his new wife that she is to be an 'Ergänzung' of himself but nevertheless demands total submission to his will. Read thus, the message conveyed by Zeline's lucky escape seems to be that Austria will only retain its unique character by holding onto its Catholic identity and resisting the seductions of the Pan-German myth. Kralik thus shows an alternative, more patriotically Austrian use for the 'Braut- und Hochzeitsmetaphorik' which played an important role in the literature of Austria's *Brückenbauer*.<sup>70</sup>

Aside from his successes with *völkisch* drama, the only genre in which Kralik's work was accepted by the professional theatre, his strengths as a writer lay in pastiching the celebrational form of the *auto sacramental* and in tailoring both his creative and his adaptational work to specific audiences and groups of performers. For example, knowing that church music was very popular towards 1900, and that choirs and orchestras were always looking for performance opportunities, Kralik had added a substantial choral element to *Das große Welttheater* for the Leo-Gesellschaft production. But he wisely made his later Calderón adaptations far less elaborate, not only taking into account the limitations of smaller amateur groups who frequently performed out of doors, but also paring down the poetry and intellectual content, so as to bring complex allegorical texts within the grasp of ordinary people. This

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<sup>68</sup> B. [Hans Brežka], 'Dienstagabend bei Kralik', *Reichspost*, 22 September 1933, pp. 8–9.

<sup>69</sup> Kralik, *Zarathustra Blaubart und der liebe Augustin*, p. 8.

<sup>70</sup> See Klaus Amann, 'Die Brückenbauer: Zur "Österreich"-Ideologie in den dreißiger Jahren', in Amann, *Die Dichter und die Politik: Essays zur österreichischen Literatur nach 1918* ([n.p.]: Edition Falter/Deuticke, 1992), pp. 94–112 (p. 106).

technique did, however, have its drawbacks, the most obvious being that such plays did not travel well and were increasingly felt to be unsuitable for the professional theatre. According to the *Reichspost*, even *Zarathustra Blaubart* suffered from this, insofar as the Burgtheater supposedly stalled for six years because Kralik's play was felt to be too simplistic for its educated audiences.<sup>71</sup>

As was evident in Chapters Four and Five, the forms of celebrational drama which Kralik favoured are inherently problematic, insofar as they make little impact unless the audience is either ideologically sympathetic to what is being 'celebrated' or sufficiently impressed by the artistic achievement to feign sympathy. It was this difficulty which determined the fate of *Kaiser Marcus Aurelius in Wien* and, exacerbated by the unsuitability of the venue for the Berlin premiere, made Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann* only a partial success in 1911. Whereas the *Everyman* play had high literary standing and could claim a certain universality, Kralik's attempt to popularize medieval and Baroque subjects was often hindered by the obscurity of the events which he chose to celebrate and by their uncertain status as a combination of myth, history and pure invention. The Habsburg legends of *Der Ruhm Österreichs* had a certain authority within Austria, akin to that of Greek myth and indeed of the Christmas story; but a legend such as that of the philosopher emperor Marcus Aurelius was less familiar and therefore commanded far less respect. As a result, audiences were less tolerant of those artistic deficiencies which are almost inevitable in festival theatre.

Although, as Chapter Eight will show, Vienna's Catholic community continued to show some interest in Kralik's work in the early years of the Second Republic, it has not really stood the test of time. Whereas Hofmannsthal quickly abandoned his claim to be the mere 'Restaurator' of the *Everyman* material, instead emphasizing 'entscheidende schöpferische Elemente' (W9 276), Kralik remained content to revive and synthesize those elements of Austria's heritage which he felt to be of most value to his generation. Lacking the creative originality to put his artistic stamp on his work, or the inclination to bring together the different aspects of his credo in an encompassing modernist vision (in the manner of Claudel or T.S. Eliot), he was satisfied if he conveyed his religious and patriotic message in an ideologically acceptable dramatic form. There are also good political reasons why Kralik's creative

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<sup>71</sup> B., 'Zarathustra Blaubart und der liebe Augustin', p. 9.

work has tended to be neglected — above all, it was too closely associated with the stridency of that political Catholicism which came to the fore in the 1890s and with the increasingly aggressive, confrontational atmosphere of the First Republic. These factors briefly gave the Catholic milieu an importance it has never recovered, but also an authoritarianism that it has sought to forget.

In many senses Kralik's character is as important as his literary work. For there can be little doubt that, without his personal energy and unflagging commitment, the cultural identity of Austria's Catholic community would have evolved more slowly than it did and been far less distinctive. Alongside the determination with which he held onto his vision of cultural revival and the singlemindedness with which he promoted it, one of Kralik's most remarkable traits was his unfailing ability to gather likeminded people around himself. When dissent appeared in the Leo-Gesellschaft towards 1900, the integralist wing of the society united under Kralik's leadership; and for the next thirty-five years, the Kralik-Kreis was a feature of Viennese cultural life, the name of its central figure becoming synonymous with the ideals and aspirations of an uncompromising conservative Catholicism.

Kralik's charisma won him many friends but also made his critics all the more caustic. For Friedrich Heer, who highlights the similarity between Kralik's mission and Hitler's ideas on cultural purification, this makes him a born dictator, 'mit düster-fanatischem Auge';<sup>72</sup> for his Catholic supporters Kralik was a 'Dichterphilosoph', the last 'Universalgenie', the man who achieved for the whole populace what Richard Wagner had achieved for the cultural elite. It almost goes without saying that the Catholic press, and especially the *Reichspost*, was unstinting in its support and fulsome in its praise.<sup>73</sup> When, for example, Alfred von Berger died in 1912, it spread the remarkable rumour that Kralik was to take over from him at the Burgtheater, 'was auf das lebhafteste zu begrüßen und sicherlich zum Vorteile des Burgtheaters wäre'.<sup>74</sup> In 1922 the same paper declared his seventieth birthday

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<sup>72</sup> Friedrich Heer, *Der Glaube des Adolf Hitler: Anatomie einer politischen Religiosität* (Munich and Esslingen: Bechtle, 1968), pp. 161–63 (p. 161). Characteristic elements of fascist language have also been discerned in early numbers of *Der Gral*. See Robert Leroy and Eckart Pastor, 'Der Gral: Aus den Anfängen einer katholischen Literaturzeitschrift', *Revue des Langues Vivantes*, 45 (1979), 29–53.

<sup>73</sup> See Ulrich Weinzierl, 'Die Kultur der "Reichspost"', in *Aufbruch und Untergang: Österreichische Kultur zwischen 1918 und 1938*, ed. by Franz Kadrnoska (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1981), pp. 325–44.

<sup>74</sup> Anon., 'Der Nachfolger Baron Bergers', *Reichspost*, 28 August 1912, p. 6.

'Kralikstag' and devoted its first two pages to a eulogy which began thus: 'Haltet eine Weile inne in der Hetzjagd eurer täglichen Sorgen, Bedürfnisse und Nöte, in dem rasenden Tanz um den Mammon, denn dieser 1. Oktober ist ein Feiertag des Oesterreichertums! Richard Kralik, das ist nur ein anderer Name für Oesterreich.'<sup>75</sup> This particular article called forth a vitriolic and extremely lengthy response from Karl Kraus, who declared that he had heard nothing of the country's new name and denounced Christian Social and *deutschnational* literature as 'der Dilettantismus als geistige Richtung, das Analphabetentum als künstlerisches Prinzip'.<sup>76</sup>

When ill-health obliged Kralik to give up public speaking shortly after the First World War, he in no way bowed out of cultural politics. By all accounts, he had always enjoyed entertaining guests at his villa in Döbling and so, in July 1920, set up his Dienstagabend-Gesellschaft, holding open house for a couple of hours and giving a lecture to this informal gathering every week until shortly before his death in 1934. Habitues liked to think of this as Vienna's only genuine literary salon and continued it in his name for some years after his death.<sup>77</sup> Almost every Austrian writer, academic and intellectual who can be classed as Catholic or conservative, and many who were simply curious, attended these gatherings at some time: the list includes Max Mell, Anton Wildgans, Joseph August Lux, Heinz Kindermann, Hermann Bahr, Richard von Schaukal, Joseph Gregor, and Eduard Castle. In so doing they not only acknowledged Kralik as the grand old man of Catholic Austria but also ensured that he established himself as a 'grey eminence' who, despite his advanced years, still exerted considerable influence on the cultural and intellectual life of the First Republic.

That the vast majority of those who sought Kralik out were a good deal younger than their host is self-evident; it does, however, raise the question of his impact on the generation which followed him. An assessment of this is provided by Wilhelm Oehl, a Catholic academic who met Kralik as a young theology student and was profoundly influenced by his ideas. He concludes the section on Kralik in the *Deutsch-Österreichische Literaturgeschichte* with this statement:

<sup>75</sup> Anon., 'Kralikstag', *Reichspost*, 30 September 1922, pp. 1-2 (p. 1).

<sup>76</sup> Karl Kraus, 'Kralikstag', *Die Fackel*, 601-07 (1922), 108-32 (pp. 110-11).

<sup>77</sup> *Mitteilungen der Kralik-Gesellschaft* appeared at irregular intervals from 1934 to 1938 and from 1954 to 1974; the society was apparently dissolved in 1986.

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Seine Tätigkeit hatte nur um ein Menschenalter zu früh eingesetzt. Er wendete sich an eine Generation, der seine Ideale nicht nur fremd, sondern ganz unverständlich waren. Erst bei dem jungen Geschlecht haben Krieg und Nachkriegszeit jene Erschütterung der Gemüter hervorgebracht, jenes religiöse Bedürfnis geweckt, jenes Streben nach einem gläubigen Christentum gezeitigt, das Kralik für seine Person bereits vorweggenommen hatte. Selbst zugegeben, daß er nicht Schule gemacht habe im eigentlichen Sinne des Wortes, hat er unleugbar als erster eine Straße betreten, auf der heute viele wandeln.<sup>78</sup>

Certainly, Kralik's aesthetics were at odds with the modernist culture of the 1890s; but it is equally true that the cultural environment became more favourable to the ideas behind Kralik's programme in the early years of the twentieth century. However, his disdain for the commercialism of the theatre and his refusal to compromise with the ethos of the 'entertainment industry' meant that he was not the man to translate abstract theory into slick professional performance. Despite his failure in this area, Kralik can be credited with bringing to public attention a number of traditional dramatic forms almost twenty years before they were taken up, albeit for rather different reasons, in the professional theatre. In so doing, he introduced one aspect of the country's cultural heritage to a section of the Viennese population which, due to financial constraints, moral reservations and limited schooling, had had little previous contact with drama and theatre.

When Kralik died on 5 February 1934, obituaries appeared in practically all the Viennese papers, and the Catholic press throughout Austria carried lengthy commemorative articles; coverage in Germany was predictably more sparse, although Ernst Wachler, director of the Harzer Bergtheater, wrote a laudatory article in the *Augsburger Postzeitung*.<sup>79</sup> Kralik's optimism and profound Catholic faith were repeatedly cited, and many writers described encountering his work in adolescence and attending his Tuesday gatherings whilst studying at university. Kralik's importance as a dramatist was perhaps best summed up by Josef Nadler in the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*:

Im Zuge des allgemeinen christlichen und volkshaften Aufschwunges Wiens führte er [Kralik] seit 1893 das altdeutsche Festspiel wieder zurück in die Hallen und auf die offenen Plätze der Stadt Wien. [...] Mit allem, was in den letzten Jahrzehnten auf die Rückkehr des

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<sup>78</sup> *Deutsch-Österreichische Literaturgeschichte*, IV, 1637.

<sup>79</sup> Ernst Wachler, 'Richard von Kralik', *Augsburger Postzeitung*, 9 February 1934, p. 2. All obituaries quoted can be found in the 'Konvolut von Aufsätzen anlässlich des Ablebens Richard von Kraliks', held in the Druckschriftensammlung of the Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek, L 126.778.

Theaters zu seiner eigenen gesunden Ursprünglichkeit drängte, mit Laienspiel und Freilichtbühne ist Kralik's Name unlöslich verknüpft.<sup>80</sup>

While Nadler concentrated on Kralik's achievements, Erwin Rainalter emphasized his lack of success in establishing his work on the professional stage: 'daß Kralik, der ganz zielbewußt um das Theater rang, sich die Bühne so schwer zu erobern vermochte, war seine eigentliche Tragik'.<sup>81</sup> In the opinion of Eduard Castle, Kralik failed because he was too idealistic and lacked 'das Dämonische der Persönlichkeit eines Richard Wagner, das früher oder später den Widerstand der stumpfen Welt besiegt'.<sup>82</sup> Joseph Gregor's view, that Kralik was 'ein Dichter, aber ein weit größerer Denker und Gestalter', was indeed shared by many who looked back over his career.<sup>83</sup>

Gregor's obituary was one of several which alluded to parallels between Kralik's notions of festival theatre and the Salzburg Festival, with Oskar Katann in *Der Gral* going so far as to claim that Kralik had welcomed this development with enthusiasm.<sup>84</sup> Aside from his description of *Jedermann* as 'das weitaus Erfreulichste' of Hofmannsthal's works (faint praise, given how strongly he disapproved of *Elektra* and *Der Rosenkavalier*), there is little substantial evidence to support the claim but, interestingly, a rumour to that effect had reached Hofmannsthal, who in 1922 asked Erika Brecht to find out 'ob R. v. Kralik mich (und meine Produktion) nicht ausstehen kann, was bei der allgemeinen Zerklüftung und bei der Natur der Literatur ich fast voraussetzen würde, oder ob, wie jemand mich versichern will, zufälligerweise fast das Gegenteil der Fall ist'.<sup>85</sup>

By far the least flattering obituary was, predictably, that of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* which condemned Kralik's backward-looking romanticism and concluded somewhat harshly that, 'in die große Masse des Volkes, des Proletariats, zu wirken, hat Richard Kralik nicht vermocht und kaum versucht'.<sup>86</sup> At the other end of the journalistic spectrum Joseph Eberle, whose cultural and political opinions were extremely close to Kralik's, eulogized him in *Schönere Zukunft* as 'vielleicht der größte Polyhistor der Gegenwart, ein

<sup>80</sup> Josef Nadler, 'Richard v. Kralik', *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 7 February 1934, pp. 2–3.

<sup>81</sup> E.H.R. [Erwin H. Rainalter], 'Richard v. Kralik gestorben', *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 5 February 1934, pp. 3–4 (p. 4).

<sup>82</sup> Eduard Castle, 'Richard von Kralik zum Gedächtnis', *Mikrophon*, 2 (March 1934), 1–3 (p. 3).

<sup>83</sup> Joseph Gregor, 'Richard v. Kralik', *Neue Freie Presse*, 18 February 1934, p. 28.

<sup>84</sup> Oscar Katann, 'Richard Kralik zum Gedächtnis', *Der Gral*, 28 (1933–34), 292–98 (p. 295).

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Doppler, 'Konkurrenz um das Katholisch-Österreichische', pp. 84, 73.

<sup>86</sup> Anon., 'Richard Kralik gestorben', *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 6 February 1934, p. 4.

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Geistesmann von ungehörter Schöpferkraft'.<sup>87</sup> After rehearsing Kralik's cultural programme at some length, he indulged in a diatribe against the liberal press and against those sections of the Catholic community which had not supported Kralik's endeavours. Eberle also attacked those authorities which had denied Kralik the honours he deserved (including the directorship of the Burgtheater and a seat in the Herrenhaus) and allowed him to spend the last years of his life in genteel poverty.

The point that Kralik had been out of step with the turn-of-the-century *Zeitgeist* but that the more conservative atmosphere of the 1920s had brought his cultural politics closer to the mainstream was repeatedly made. Oskar Katann, writing this time in *Der christliche Ständestaat*, pointedly claimed Kralik as a supporter of the Dollfuss government. In an article which gives Kralik's politics a coherence his own accounts never achieved, Katann recalls that the ideology of the *Ständestaat* had its roots in the romantic Catholicism of the Vogelsang school to which Kralik belonged and suggests that Kralik's politics anticipated those of Ignaz Seipel, a comparison which is valid if one thinks of the authoritarian, anti-democratic Seipel of the late 1920s rather than of the accommodative coalition leader of whom Kralik had been fiercely critical in the early years of the Republic. In a later number of the same journal an article by the British Germanist Edith Raybould reveals the difficulty of using a figure such as Kralik to prop up the Austrian idea: under the title 'Kralik und das germanische Problem' she points out, quite correctly, that the circles in which Kralik moved as a young man laid the theoretical basis for National Socialism and warns against undervaluing his 'Germanism', substantial evidence of which she finds in his literary production, in his involvement with Wachler and the German *Heimatkunst* movement, and in his continuing love of combining Germanic myth with Christian legends. This uncertainty with regard to Kralik's political sympathies exposes one of the key weaknesses of Austro-fascism.<sup>88</sup>

However ambiguous Kralik's position may appear in retrospect, his funeral gives an indication of the esteem in which he was publicly held by both Church and State: President Miklas attended the ceremony, together with the Minister for Education Kurt Schuschnigg, and many other state functionaries

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<sup>87</sup> Joseph Eberle, *Schönere Zukunft*, 9 (18 February 1934), 511–14 (p. 511).

<sup>88</sup> Oskar Katann, 'Kralik als politischer Denker', *Der christliche Ständestaat*, 1, xi (18 February 1934), 7–10; Edith Raybould, 'Kralik und das germanische Problem', *Der christliche Ständestaat*, 1, xxii (6 May 1934), 6–9.

and representatives of Catholic organizations. Cardinal Innitzer officiated, and the *Reichspost* reported that, as the cortege made its way to the Zentralfriedhof, where the municipality had granted Kralik an *Ehrengrab*, thousands lined the streets. Miklas and Schuschnigg both gave eulogies, the former characterizing Kralik thus:

Riesenhaft und monumental, ein Führer und eine Leuchte in den Tagen der Irrungen und Wirrnisse, ein Mahner und Warner für Volk und Heimat und für die Welt, ein Kündler österreichischer Größe und österreichischer Ehre, aber auch gesamtdeutscher Sendung unseres Landes, ein Prophet österreichischer Selbstbesinnung, ein Wegweiser in eine glücklichere Zukunft.<sup>89</sup>

In 1934 that happier future was an uncertain and a distant prospect, rendered all the more so by the political ambiguity of *großdeutsch* Catholicism.

Kralik's death came only a few weeks after that of Hermann Bahr. For Joseph Gregor, writing in the *Neue Freie Presse*, it was as if the last remnants of old Austria had finally been lost. Although Bahr and Kralik had concurred in the belief that it was Germany's nobler part, in other respects they were very different: Bahr, the man of tomorrow, always eager to celebrate the next new literary trend, and Kralik, constantly looking to the Catholic past for forms which had no need to change; the prophet of modernism and the prophet in the wilderness. Without both elements, the picture of Austrian *fin-de-siècle* culture is incomplete; Kralik and the Catholic festival culture which he was instrumental in creating are an essential part of the cultural history of the First Republic. Chapter Seven will therefore consider the Salzburg Festival and *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* against that backdrop. This makes it possible to appreciate fully the selectivity with which Hofmannsthal viewed Austria's Catholic tradition and the difficulties he faced in his attempt to assimilate his own work into it.

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<sup>89</sup> Anon., 'Richard v. Kraliks letzter Weg', *Reichspost*, 9 February 1934, pp. 7–8 (p. 7).

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### WORLD THEATRE IN SALZBURG

*Dem unermüdlichen Planer und Dichter Richard von Kralik, der durch Jahrzehnte im Sinne Attikas und des mittelalterlichen Festspiels ein österreichisches Theater forderte und unspielbare Stücke für diese gedachte Bühne schrieb, mußte sehr vieles zu Hilfe kommen, bis sich seine Wünsche in anderer Weise und nicht unter seinem Namen erfüllten.<sup>1</sup>*

With this assertion Josef Nadler opens a section on drama in his *Literaturgeschichte Österreichs*. Although Kralik would no doubt have disagreed, it is nevertheless true that he did not succeed in finding a formula that worked on the professional stage. The two men who brought the crowds flocking in to festival theatre were Hofmannsthal and Reinhardt. Having experimented with the cultic drama of ancient Greece and of the Christian Middle Ages, they combined forces again in the immediate postwar period, in order to establish the Salzburg Festival as an international showcase for Austrian cultural achievement.

The first section of this chapter gives an account of the Festival's genesis, with particular emphasis on exploring Catholic attitudes towards the project. Contributions to the *Mitteilungen der Salzburger Festspielhaus-Gemeinde*, a series of newsletters sent to supporters of the venture between 1918 and 1922, will be used to assess how far Hofmannsthal's publicity material reflected collective ambitions and how far the form in which the Festival was ultimately realized diverged from the original ideas. This will be followed by detailed analysis of *Das Salzburger große Welttheater*, the one dramatic text which Hofmannsthal wrote specifically for the Salzburg Festival.

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<sup>1</sup> Nadler, *Literaturgeschichte Österreichs*, p. 510.

### *Festival Planning*

For many Austrians, Salzburg was a city of dreams; the natural beauty of its situation combined with the splendour of its architecture to produce an impression of beguiling unreality. It was here, in Mozart's birthplace, that the Baroque notion of the world as theatre seemed to make most impact on the modern mind. Joseph August Lux, a conservative Catholic and an early supporter of the Festival, gives a moving testimony to this:

Die Ideen der großen italienischen Festdekorateure fanden hier ihren Niederschlag. Renaissance ist Raumkunst, Theater großen Stils; das Barock gibt die dekorative Note dazu, den Aufschwung ins Absolute. So ist die Stadt eigentlich ein Architekturtheater ersten Ranges, die engen Gassen sind Korridore, die Plätze Fürstensäle mit geschlossenen Wandungen, Konglomerate von solchen Prachtgemächern, deren künstlerisches Geheimnis in der wohlberechneten Schauvorbereitung, in der blendenden Raumentfaltung und vor allem in den wohlabgewogenen rhythmischen Verhältnissen nach dem Gesetz der göttlichen Proportion besteht, [...] die heutigen Menschen passen schlecht in diesen stolzen Rahmen. Aber abends, wenn die Plätze menschenleer sind, in mondhellen Nächten, fangen die Steine zu leben an und atmen den Geist der großen Szenen aus Mozarts 'Don Juan'; die süßen Schauer der Romantik wehen aus den Kulissen schmaler düsterer Gassen, wo die Gotik haust, Kulissen scheinen die Haus- und Palastfronten, kulissenhaft die Landschaft, die Mönchswand, die Hohenfeste, alles in allem eine Feerie.<sup>2</sup>

In the first instance Lux highlights the decorative aspects of Salzburg's architecture, the sense of harmonious orchestration. This sensitivity is not surprising given that he had earlier been a prominent publicist of the Secession movement; but it is immediately complemented by the view that 'diese unvergleichliche architektonische Freilichtbühne', created largely at the behest of Salzburg's archbishops and therefore a product of their faith, provides a perfect backdrop for Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, the most serious and Baroque of his operas.

Salzburg's inherent theatricality, an artistic potential independent of the narrow provincialism frequently thought to characterize much of the modern population, gave the idea of a Salzburg Festival its unique appeal.<sup>3</sup> It was easy to imagine that, given a sensitive director and a suitable text, one might

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<sup>2</sup> Joseph August Lux, *München-Augsburger Abendzeitung*, 24 August 1920; reproduced in *Theater für die Republik im Spiegel der Kritik*, ed. by Günther Rühle, 2 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1967), I, 222–24 (p. 222).

<sup>3</sup> The discrepancy between the image and the reality of Salzburg is stressed in Yates, *Schnitzler, Hofmannsthal, and the Austrian Theatre*, pp. 205–09.

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create there a stunning *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a theatrical experience that would merge seamlessly with the city itself. The passage cited above is indeed how Lux introduced his review of the production which came closest to this, the 1920 premiere of *Jedermann*, which Reinhardt staged in the cathedral square, before its great Baroque portal. Lux went on:

Hier spielen Dinge mit, die kein Theater gibt. Hier spielen die Kirchenglocken mit, die machtvollen Posaunenchor, die kühlklare Domfassade, der Platz mit seinen wohl abgewogenen Raumverhältnissen, dieser sichtbaren Musik, der sanfte Orgelton; die künstlerischen Elemente des katholischen Glaubens, das Sakrale des architektonischen Rahmens und das unwägbare Element, das man Stimmung nennt.<sup>4</sup>

That someone such as Lux should have approved of this exploitation of the Catholic cultural heritage is clearly significant; it suggests that, at least initially, the Festival had genuinely broad appeal.

Notwithstanding this, it is instructive to set Lux's image of Salzburg alongside Bahr's and Hofmannsthal's first published impressions. In his essay 'Die Hauptstadt von Europa: eine Phantasie in Salzburg' (1900) Bahr strolls around the city with an imaginary companion and, arriving at the Mirabell gardens, exclaims:

Da Theater spielen! Stell dir das vor! Auf dem Kies, zwischen den Beeten, ein Reigen schlanker, mit Rosen gegürteter Frauen; vor dem Brunnen, unter den schweren gelben Blüten, ein Page, der Verse spricht; und in der Allee drüben, an den Marmor gelehnt, lauschend entzückt frohe Zuhörer. Und in den Blättern würde es rauschen und die Wasser würden springen. Wäre das nicht schön?<sup>5</sup>

The imagined scenario has a painterly quality reminiscent of Hofmannsthal's nostalgic 'Prolog zu dem Buch Anatol'; spectators and performers are all part of the same fascinating tableau. Hofmannsthal too saw a theatrical potential in Salzburg and as a young man envisaged it in fanciful terms. His essay on the Mozart Centenary celebrations (1891) penetrates beyond the correctness of the municipal gesture and the satisfyingly authentic feel of *The Magic Flute* in Salzburg, 'eine große Meinungerei, das Galvanisieren eines erloschenen Stils in einer passenden Umgebung' (RA1 515), to a level at which, as in Bahr's essay, reality and fantasy blend into an enchantingly ethereal vision. Southern,

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<sup>4</sup> *Theater für die Republik im Spiegel der Kritik*, I, 223.

<sup>5</sup> Hermann Bahr, 'Die Hauptstadt von Europa: eine Phantasie in Salzburg', in *Das Hermann-Bahr-Buch* (Berlin: Fischer, 1913), pp. 122–29 (p. 123).

almost Italianate features vie with a dark northernness; the old town co-exists with the new. As night falls, the atmosphere is so intense that every shimmer provokes a sensation, every street corner is a picture to remember. Although Hofmannsthal mentions that 'die souveränen Herren von Salzburg haben in ihrer kirchlich-weltlichen Eleganz das Repräsentieren immer verstanden', neither his account nor Bahr's dwells on the clerical origins of the Baroque, preferring to bring out the more frivolous Rococo qualities. For the young Hofmannsthal atmosphere is supplied by a 'Gewirr von galanten Treppen und Sakristeitüren, Boudoirs und Klostergängen' (RA1 516). Here, as in Lux's evocation, Salzburg is the city of Mozart, but Hofmannsthal conjures up rather different aspects of his work: the light playfulness rather than the sombre moral framework of *Don Giovanni*.

Bahr's turn-of-the-century fantasia on Salzburg proposes that it should become the spiritual capital of Europe, home to all who consider their European identity more important than national allegiance. It is typical of the chameleon-like Bahr, who went to live in Salzburg in 1912, that he soon styled himself not as a free-thinking European but a Catholic *Heimatsdichter* returning to the stronghold of the Austrian Church. There is far more continuity between Hofmannsthal's 1891 essay and his later views. An awareness of the clerical dimension of the Baroque is matched by a detachment from its political significance; and in Hofmannsthal's comment that the Mozart centenary, although primarily a celebration of Austrian culture, also has 'ein wenig für gute Europäer' (RA1 517), one glimpses the same fusion of national pride and cosmopolitan consciousness that will inform the ideology of the Salzburg Festival: the theatre and its instigators will turn their back on the bitterness of Viennese politics and the shortcomings of the Burgtheater, so as to construct an alternative Austrian identity and show it proudly to the outside world.

Bahr's idealistic vision of Salzburg remained a chimera, not least because it was the town's commercial potential which interested him in the first few years of this century. As early as 1903 Bahr had the idea of establishing a summer festival there. He got as far as proposing to Reinhardt that they should rent the Stadttheater for a month in high summer and transfer successful productions from Reinhardt's Berlin theatres.<sup>6</sup> Although Bahr persevered with schemes of this sort for several years, nothing ever came of them. One can

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<sup>6</sup> *Meister und Meisterbriefe um Hermann Bahr*, ed. by Joseph Gregor (Vienna: H. Bauer, 1947), p. 188.

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see, nonetheless, that it might have been a profitable venture: the town and the Mozart connection drew many visitors, in addition to which the Emperor and many of his more affluent subjects liked to spend the summer months in the nearby resorts of the Salzkammergut. However, when Bahr writes to his wife in 1906 of plans to build a festival theatre 'wo Reinhardt, die Sorma und ich Schauspiel, Du und ich aber Oper machen [...] und wir alle sehr viel Geld verdienen', there is neither altruism nor ideology in his thinking.<sup>7</sup> The planned guest performances would have fed off tourism and taken no account of the wishes of the indigenous population; but genuine festival theatre requires, even in the twentieth century, that some measure of local enthusiasm join forces with the commercial enterprise.

In the late nineteenth century, local plans to improve the cultural profile of Salzburg centred on the Mozart legacy. Music festivals held intermittently from 1877 onwards lost their initial amateurism, attracting big-name performers and large audiences; consequently, local enthusiasts began to think seriously about building a festival theatre capable of staging model productions. This was largely what Friedrich Gehmacher, a native of Salzburg, and Heinrich Damisch, a Viennese music critic, had in mind in 1916 when they began to canvass support amongst Vienna's music community. Despite the War, they made sufficient progress for the Salzburger Festspielhaus-Gemeinde (henceforth referred to as SFG) to be founded in Vienna on 1 August 1917.<sup>8</sup>

Although Bahr's plans for Salzburg came to nothing, the town itself captured Reinhardt's imagination at a time when he was disillusioned with Berlin and looking for a new challenge. He too saw Salzburg as a perfect theatrical backdrop and by 1916 his ambition to stage open-air productions there was widely known. He had grander plans too. In April 1917, several months before the founding of the SFG, Reinhardt sent a document headed 'Denkschrift zur Errichtung eines Festspielhauses in Hellbrunn' to the directorate of Vienna's Imperial court theatres. It proposed a site in the grounds of Schloss Hellbrunn, the Rococo palace originally built as the summer residence of Salzburg's archbishops. Situated just outside the city, towards Berchtesgaden, its natural beauty and graceful architecture put Bayreuth in the

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<sup>7</sup> *Meister und Meisterbriefe um Hermann Bahr*, p. 196 (note 173).

<sup>8</sup> The account which follows draws on these works: Oskar Holl, 'Dokumente zur Entstehung der Salzburger Festspiele: Unveröffentlichtes aus der Korrespondenz der Gründer', *Maske und Kothurn*, 13 (1967), 148–79; Edda Fuhrich and Gisela Prossnitz, *Die Salzburger Festspiele: Ihre Geschichte in Daten, Zeitzeugnissen und Bildern, I: 1920–1945* (Salzburg and Vienna: Residenz-Verlag, 1990); Steinberg, *The Meaning of the Salzburg Festival*, especially pp. 42–83.

shade. As when Kralik wanted to build a festival theatre on the outskirts of Vienna, Reinhardt proposed that the ideal establishment should be set apart from everyday life and treated as a place of pilgrimage in which theatre would be celebrated 'mit aller künstlerischen Weihe'.

For Reinhardt, the increased popularity of his theatres during the War proved that the theatre was neither a decadent institution, nor a luxury for the few, but 'ein *Lebensmittel* für die Bedürftigen'. In anxious times everyone needs some means of forgetting their troubles for an hour or two; theatre, 'die Welt des Scheines', offers solace to the dispirited nation.<sup>9</sup> Although he does not present this, as in peace time, as an invitation for men of war to rediscover the imaginative worlds of childhood, he nevertheless stresses the autonomous nature of the created world and its revitalizing powers. He argues that it should be 'eines der ersten Friedenswerke' to build a festival theatre that will stand as a monument to Austria's resilience and ensure that something positive emerges from the experience of war.<sup>10</sup>

Reinhardt hopes that the new theatre's repertoire will be broadly based, concentrating on those demanding works to which normal theatres are rarely able to do justice. To a list which includes Greek drama, Calderón, Shakespeare, Raimund, Grillparzer, and the German classics, Reinhardt adds the coda that he would also like to stage Christian mystery and passion plays, a form of drama which 'auch über die Kreise der Kunstverständigen hinaus den weitesten Volkskreisen erhebende, geistig und sittlich segensreiche Eindrücke feierlicher Art erschließen soll'.<sup>11</sup> No doubt this is partly a cautious political addendum, but it is also an admission that, as far as popular taste is concerned, religious drama is making a come-back, and that the professional theatre must respond to this development, if it wishes to reach a wider audience.

Salzburg could not accommodate two festival theatres, least of all in the economic conditions of the immediate postwar years. Holl's documentation shows that Damisch and Gehmacher were initially wary of inviting Reinhardt to join forces with them, lest he take over their planned Mozart Festival and turn it into something far more eclectic and vulgarly commercial. As will become clear, they had good reason to be nervous. However, by early 1918 combining forces was the only way forward for both sides: Reinhardt needed

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<sup>9</sup> Max Reinhardt, 'Denkschrift zur Errichtung eines Festspielhauses in Hellbrunn', in Reinhardt, *Schriften*, pp. 176–82 (p. 177): italics in original.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

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local support and an organizational structure; the SFG had these but lacked the sort of prestige associated with Reinhardt's name. Hence, when the mayor of Salzburg, Ferdinand Künzelmann, approached Reinhardt on behalf of the SFG in July 1918, Reinhardt wrote back outlining his ideas for the Festival in a manner calculated to calm their fears. Whereas his earlier 'Denkschrift' made no mention of Mozart, Reinhardt now stressed that his should be the guiding spirit and that the repertoire should include not only spoken drama, but also opera and operetta. This, of course, strengthens the Festival's claim to be safeguarding Austria's cultural heritage. Mystery and nativity plays are again mentioned as a means of broadening the appeal; and Reinhardt even writes somewhat sanctimoniously that 'diejenigen, die jetzt ganz neuen Schichten die Kunst vermitteln, tragen eine große Verantwortung, sie haben das geistige Wachstum der kommenden Menschheit in ihren Händen'.<sup>12</sup>

The carefully worded letter obviously served its purpose, for in August 1918 Reinhardt was invited to join the artistic advisory committee of the SFG, together with Richard Strauss and the conductor Franz Schalk. Although Hofmannsthal and the stage-designer Alfred Roller were not co-opted until five months later, correspondence reveals that, almost as soon as Hofmannsthal's friend Andrian had taken over as *Intendant* of the Burgtheater, Hofmannsthal and Reinhardt were machinating for the directorate of the Imperial theatres to take the Festival under its wing and give Reinhardt a free hand as artistic director. On 27 August 1918 Hofmannsthal tells Andrian to expect two memoranda, one which is private (sent in a letter of 8 September), and one 'in Form eines Briefes von Reinhardt an Dich, der Dir (u. anderen Personen) die Bedeutung der Sache vom österreichischen, kulturpolitischen u. Prestigestandpunkt auseinandersetzt'.<sup>13</sup> The second memorandum is almost certainly the letter of 5 September, sections of which Andrian later allowed Rudolph Lothar to reproduce in *Das Wiener Burgtheater* (1934). One important point is that this document was drafted not by Reinhardt but by Hofmannsthal, who apologizes (on 27 August) for his tardiness in completing it. Secondly, even if Reinhardt was less interested in the ideology of festival theatre than Hofmannsthal and tended to see its value not in helping to shape the future but in providing an escape from the unpleasantness of the present, they undeniably worked together closely from the outset; Reinhardt allowed Hofmannsthal to

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<sup>12</sup> Reinhardt, *Schriften*, pp. 182–87 (p. 184); the letter is also reproduced in Holl, 'Dokumente zur Entstehung der Salzburger Festspiele', pp. 174–78 (p. 175).

<sup>13</sup> Hofmannsthal – Andrian, *Briefwechsel*, p. 267: Hofmannsthal to Andrian, 27 August 1918.

write in his name that the Festival would be 'ein mächtiges Lenkmittel [...] über den Sinn und die Phantasie der großen Massen, so mächtig, daß es nicht länger den Händen niedriger Spekulanten überlassen werden darf, sondern, daß die höchsten und wohlverstandenen politischen Zwecken sich seiner bedienen müssen'.<sup>14</sup> Whereas this letter has a strong ideological thrust, Hofmannsthal's private memorandum to Andrian concentrates on the personal qualities and achievements of the director; like Reinhardt's letter to the SFG, it presents his career to date as a 'Vorarbeit' for the challenge of Salzburg and stresses that this will be a way of returning Austrian talent to where it belongs. Reinhardt's proviso, which has Hofmannsthal's blessing, is that the SFG, 'das paradieren will, aber natürlich ahnungslos ist was gemacht werden soll' should be reduced to an 'Ehrenfunktion'.<sup>15</sup> This take-over attempt failed because of the collapse of the Empire in November 1918, obliging Hofmannsthal and Reinhardt to revert to force of personality and artistic vision as the means of asserting themselves.

If the Salzburg Festival was to get beyond the drawing-board in this new situation, it needed wide public support; the venture had to be marketed in such a way as to appeal to a spectrum of political opinion and cultural taste that included supporters of the original Mozart Festival, entrepreneurs thinking primarily of the potential increase in tourism, local people who were understandably wary of innovations which might destroy the character of their town, Austrian patriots who hoped for an emphasis on specifically Austrian traditions, supporters of union with Germany who wanted to see a more broadly German cultural programme, and conservative Catholics, some of whom were suspicious of anything in which Reinhardt had a hand, and some who grudgingly admired his ability to popularize radically different forms of theatre and wondered if it could not serve their own cause.

As with his *Österreichische Bibliothek*, Hofmannsthal seems deliberately to have adopted the policy of smoothing over differences of opinion in order to create the impression of a broad consensus. Applied to such a major project it was, however, a potentially disastrous approach. The range of proposals put forward in the *Mitteilungen der Salzburger Festspielhaus-Gemeinde* shows very clearly that, while the Festival had no definite shape, each contributor was conveniently free to see what he or she wanted to see, but that there was little

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<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Rudolph Lothar, *Das Wiener Burgtheater: Ein Wahrzeichen österreichischer Kunst und Kultur* (Vienna: Augartenverlag, 1934), p. 420.

<sup>15</sup> Hofmannsthal – Andrian, *Briefwechsel*, p. 282: Hofmannsthal to Andrian, 8 September 1918.

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real debate. The first number, which appeared in July 1918, opens with an article whose title, 'Das Mozartfestspielhaus in Salzburg', suggests that the Society has not lost sight of its original objective. However, the same issue summarizes enthusiastic testimonials from prominent musicians, artists and writers, several of whom envisage a very different focus.

Also included in the first issue is a brief survey of press coverage. As if courting Catholic approval, it notes an encouraging response from the *Reichspost*, where a short feuilleton had supposedly emphasized 'die Möglichkeiten, die diese Bühne für die Wiedererweckung alter Mysterienspiele bietet'.<sup>16</sup> An unsigned article entitled 'Ein Oesterreichisches Festspielhaus in Salzburg' had indeed appeared in that Viennese daily on 19 April 1918. It goes so far in stressing the Society's interest in unearthing little-known religious dramas that one might be forgiven for thinking that Kralik rather than Reinhardt was behind the venture. After paying brief homage to Mozart, the article states that 'die Festspielhausgemeinde hat noch viel weitergehende Pläne, von denen uns hier einige besonders am Herzen liegen'. By 1918 the *Reichspost* assumes that mystery and morality plays are the principal form of drama in which its readership is interested: Kralik's cause has become its cause.

It is striking that the *Reichspost* article interprets the concept of festival theatre in religious rather than in aesthetic terms, thus giving precise form to the vague promises of Reinhardt's blueprints:

Es wird nämlich geplant, nicht nur im Sommer musikalische Festspiele zu veranstalten, sondern man denkt daran, dieses Haus das ganze Jahr hindurch, mit gewissen Pausen allerdings, zu benützen, und zwar sollen eben, wie im Advent oder in der Passionszeit, alte Weihnachtsspiele, Passionen, Legendenspiele usw. aufgeführt werden.

From this point on, there is no limit to the writer's enthusiasm. Not only does he praise Reinhardt's previous attempts to stage works in this genre (presumably *Jedermann* and *Das Mirakel*), he also expresses the naive hope that the SFG will take the trouble to rummage through church archives for authentic texts: 'Es liegen sicher in den Archiven unserer Stifte und Klöster solche alte Spiele, alte geistliche Resiten und Mysterienstücke, von denen gewiß manch eines verdiente, dem Staube der Archive entrissen und zu neuem

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<sup>16</sup> F.K. [Ferdinand Künzelmann], 'Zeitungs-Rundschau', *Mitteilungen der SFG*, 1 (1918), 14–15 (p. 15). Only in the first volume of the *Mitteilungen* are the pages numbered continuously throughout its parts.

Leben und Wirken erweckt zu werden.' And, to top even this, the article closes by saying that any 'verschollene und unbekannte Schätze [...], die einst aus dem kunstfreudigen Boden Oesterreichs unter dem Schutze der Kirche erwachsen sind' will be gratefully received at the Salzburg headquarters of the SFG, Dreifaltigkeitsgasse 16.<sup>17</sup> This must be a case of supporters believing what they want to believe, taking casual references to mystery and morality plays at face value and assuming that when Hofmannsthal writes, as below, of timing performances to coincide with religious festivals, he means necessarily to perform religious plays.

Wann sollen solche Festspiele stattfinden?

Alljährlich im Sommer, dann und wann aber auch zu andern Zeiten, etwa um Weihnachten, oder sonst im Winter, auch zu Ostern und Pfingsten. (RA2 258)

It is not surprising, given such misapprehensions, that some of the Festival's Catholic supporters rapidly became disenchanted. Joseph August Lux, who went to live at Anif, near Salzburg after the First World War and whose review of the *Jedermann* premiere was quoted above, is the most striking example of this. Clearly, the SFG regarded him as a valuable publicist within Catholic circles: his testimonial was included in the first number of the *Mitteilungen*, and the next two contain an exposition of his 'Ideen zum Festspielhaus'. The opening statement, 'es gilt nicht nur in die Breite, sondern auch in die Höhe und Tiefe zu bauen' immediately brings to mind the three-level stage of the traditional mystery play, with the flat stage of commercial, worldly drama as its antithesis.<sup>18</sup> The Festival is not to be a tourist attraction, like Bayreuth, but the most perfect *Gesamtkunstwerk* since the Olympic Games. Brushing aside the objections of local tradesmen, Lux argues that the new theatre should be built at Hellbrunn, 'wo der Blick die blauschimmernde Alpenlandschaft mit der Hohenfeste wie eine Vision der Gralsburg umfassen kann'.<sup>19</sup> Coming from his pen, the image of the Holy Grail does not suggest that Salzburg should be modelling itself on Bayreuth, which Lux dismisses as a 'Spießernest'; rather it betrays the influence of Kralik, and implicitly aligns the Festival with the cultural ideals of the *Gralbund*. As in Reinhardt's 'Denkschrift' the

<sup>17</sup> Anon., 'Ein Oesterreichisches Festspielhaus in Salzburg', *Reichspost*, 19 April 1918, pp. 3–4.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph August Lux, 'Ideen zum Festspielhaus', *Mitteilungen der SFG*, 1 (1918), 18–20, 42–45 (p. 18).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

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theatre is compared to a religious shrine, but this time the language is more strident, the analogy more direct:

Die Kirche hat ihre Wallfahrtsstätten in der Regel nicht in die Enge der Siedlungen oder Städte verlegt, sondern sie ist der überlieferten Gewohnheit der Götterheiligung gefolgt und hat ihre Wallfahrtsstätten an die Kultorte gelegt, wo immer schon der Mensch die Gottheit suchte, auf Hügeln und weitausschauenden Plätzen, abgerückt von dem profanen Treiben der Märkte.<sup>20</sup>

Viewing the project realistically, Lux states that 'nur die Kultur denkbar ist, die sich auf dieser rechnerischen Welt auch wirtschaftlich erhalten kann'. By inclination he is, however, idealistic and doctrinaire, concerned above all 'nicht ein I-Tüpfchen der Kunst- und Kulturidee preiszugeben'.<sup>21</sup>

As was evident at the beginning of this chapter, Lux's review of the *Jedermann* premiere is, on the whole, extremely complimentary. He applauds Reinhardt's audacity in staging wild bacchanalian revels before a house of God and speaks highly of all the major performers. His only substantial criticism is directed towards the music which he finds stagy and overpowering: 'Orgel und ein A-capella-Chor hätten hier allein ungleich größere sakralere Wirkung getan'.<sup>22</sup> Being accustomed to Catholic ritual, Lux also regrets that no incense is used in the final scenes. However, in the few months following the premiere Lux turned from an ardent supporter of the Festival into a bitter opponent, with the *Mitteilungen* recording in the spring of 1921 that difficulties were being caused by 'die Salzburger Bevölkerung, die nicht zuletzt dank den aufreizenden Ausfällen des Herrn Jos. Aug. Lux zu ihrer schroffen Ablehnung des Fremdenverkehrs kam'.<sup>23</sup>

Lux had from the outset been opposed to the idea of the Festival as a mere tourist attraction, but the influx of tourists and the strain they placed on the local economy was only one cause of his disenchantment. Opposed on aesthetic and architectural grounds to the plan to convert Salzburg's riding school complex (including the outdoor Felsenreitschule) into a festival theatre, he campaigned vigorously against it in the press; he may also have been dismayed by rumours that Reinhardt, who toured Scandinavia with his company towards the end of 1920, was planning to assume complete control

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<sup>20</sup> Lux, 'Ideen zum Festspielhaus', p. 20.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>22</sup> *Theater für die Republik im Spiegel der Kritik*, I, 223.

<sup>23</sup> *Mitteilungen der SFG*, 4, iii/iv (March/April 1921), 17.

and build what would effectively have been a 'Reinhardt-Festspielhaus' with the backing of Swedish financiers.<sup>24</sup> Whether or not this too was a factor, Lux had certainly left the SFG by the spring of 1921 and subsequently became one of the Festival's fiercest critics. It is probably no coincidence that he began at this time to involve himself more closely with Kralik's circle and with the Catholic *Laienspiel* movement. Beginning with *Das Fenster* in 1918, Lux had written a number of modern mystery plays and, although *Das Fenster* was briefly staged in 1921, failed to find acceptance for his work in the professional theatre. Like Kralik before him, Lux seems to have responded by turning his attention to amateur performance, working with the *Spielleute Gottes* and eventually forming a breakaway 'Lux-Truppe' which concentrated on his own, often hard-hitting plays.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to the fact that little attempt was made to reach a consensus within the SFG, a further reason why early supporters of the Festival differed so greatly in their cultural expectations was that, in the immediate postwar period, the political situation and the future of German-speaking Austria were so uncertain. Although the majority of the population in the Dual Monarchy, of all nationalities, had supported the war effort, and the Imperial army fought bravely until the last months, the perennial problems of nationalism re-emerged strongly when Parliament was reconvened in 1917, with the result that the Empire had collapsed even before the peace treaties had been signed. In November 1918 the predominantly German-speaking areas which were left over declared the democratic republic of German Austria (*Deutschösterreich*), which was to be an integral part of the German republic. However, under the Treaty of St Germain-en-Laye (1919) unification with Germany was expressly forbidden, the name was reduced to plain Austria, and the country lost valuable territory, including the Sudetenland and South Tyrol. There was very little sense of Austrian identity in the new Republic; away from Vienna, regional patriotism had traditionally been strong, and Cisleithania had been held together largely by dynastic loyalty. Hence several areas, including Salzburg, considered either bidding for independence or transferring their allegiance elsewhere; Austria's territorial boundaries remained uncertain until 1922, and few people welcomed the entity which we now know as Austria. A *deutsch-national* movement continued to find support, partly because the rump Republic

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<sup>24</sup> See Fuhrich and Prossnitz, *Die Salzburger Festspiele*, pp. 26–28.

<sup>25</sup> See *Deutsch-Österreichische Literaturgeschichte*, IV, 1633; after Kralik's death in 1934 Lux helped to found the Kralik-Gesellschaft.

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seemed economically unviable, and partly because many German-speaking Austrians had never lost the sense of being part of a German *Kulturnation*.

Neither Hofmannsthal, nor indeed Kralik, Bahr or Andrian was happy with the Republic, but all were opposed to Anschluss with Weimar Germany and therefore worked to raise awareness of Austria's distinctive contribution to the German cultural tradition. This relied primarily on an idealized image of Austria's imperial past and of the cultural richness which that had engendered.<sup>26</sup> For Hofmannsthal as for Bahr the model was located in the Austria of Maria Theresia; hoping for a restoration of the monarchy, Kralik glorified the Habsburg tradition and, like Andrian and Bahr, repeatedly stressed the importance of the Catholic Church. However, it sits somewhat uneasily with this Austrian particularism that all of the above thought of Austria as the true heir to the German *Reichsidee* and were never therefore able to regard the postwar situation as anything more than provisional.

The difficulty of defining an Austrian cultural identity within the inescapable German context is reflected in the *Mitteilungen der SFG*. Taking the conservative Catholic view, Lux plays down the Festival's 'German' character by dissociating it from Bayreuth and stressing its reliance on the Catholic heritage. Other contributors foreground either Austria's regional folk traditions or parallels with Bayreuth, often at the expense of the Catholic element. A brief examination of these alternatives will show the minefield through which Hofmannsthal had to pick his way in producing his publicity material and help to contextualize his vision of Salzburg.

The Catholic heritage features to some extent in any characterization of Austrian folk culture, if only as a form of local coloration. Occasionally the two are synonymous, as with the carol 'Stille Nacht', the centenary of which is celebrated in the *Mitteilungen* at Christmas 1918. This is a perfect symbol of Austria's *völkisch* and Catholic tradition, since its fame spread not through publication but because text and music were passed informally from parish to parish. More frequently the enrichment of folklore involves an impoverishment or distortion of Christian doctrine. The January 1919 issue of the *Mitteilungen* includes a lengthy article entitled 'Weihnachtskrippe und Hirtenlied'. Its

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<sup>26</sup> A useful survey of the cultural politics of Bahr, Andrian, Wildgans and Kralik is provided by Peter Pawlowsky, 'Das Österreichbild einiger Zeitgenossen Hofmannsthals', *Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur*, 6 (1962), 321–32; a more simplistic approach is adopted in Stanley Suval, 'The Search for a Fatherland', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 4/5 (1968–69), 275–299; for a critical account of Kralik's cultural politics during the First Republic see David C. Large, 'Richard von Kralik's Search for a Fatherland', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 17/18 (1981–82), 143–55.

author, Dr Franz Forstner, enthuses about an exhibition of cribs by a local artist and about a recent 'Hirtenliederabend'. Both transform the Christmas story into a piece of local myth: Bethlehem becomes Salzburg and the shepherds 'kernige, deutsche Kraftgestalten, Bauern und Jäger', often wearing 'Abzeichen der Salzburgischen Bergheimat am Halse'. In this situation the acclamation 'Er ist geworden wie einer aus uns!' becomes an assertion of local exclusivity rather than of universal humanity, a source of amusement rather than awe.<sup>27</sup>

Forstner argues in his final paragraph that cribs, shepherds' songs and the projected Salzburg Festival all aim at 'Verklärung und Vertiefung unseres Volkslebens'.<sup>28</sup> However, the difficulty of seeing the Festival as distinctly Austrian *Heimatkunst* becomes evident if one sets Forstner's article alongside one in the same issue by Theodor Antropp, whose approach to 'Der Festspielgedanke', as he titles his contribution, is far more *deutschnational*.

Sprechen wir von Festspielen, denken wir unwillkürlich an jene von Bayreuth, die uns als ein unerreichtes Idealbild vorschweben, und jeder Versuch, etwas ähnliches zu schaffen, dünkt uns darum als ein gefährliches Wagnis, wo nicht gar als ein Frevel, der letzten Endes im unlauteren Wettbewerb wurzelt.<sup>29</sup>

Although Antropp's attitude to Bayreuth is positively reverential, one cannot dispute his assertion that the growth of interest in regional festivals extends throughout the German-speaking world and is inspired, at least in part, by Bayreuth.

Wohl hat das Bayreuther Beispiel schon da und dort fruchtbringend gewirkt, und die Wiederaufnahme volkstümlicher Passionsspiele, die Lutherspiele, die festlichen Volksspiele in Rothenburg und Kochel, die Ausführung des Wormser Volkstheaters sowie des Harzer Bergtheaters stehen in idealem Zusammenhange mit dem von Wagner aufgegriffenen Festspielgedanken.<sup>30</sup>

This makes clear that, if the Salzburg Festival was not to appear either parochial or an imitation of Bayreuth, it had to find some distinctive way of defining its cultural mission.

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<sup>27</sup> Franz Forstner, 'Weihnachtskrippe und Hirtenlied', *Mitteilungen der SFG*, 2, i (January 1919), 7–10 (pp. 7, 9).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>29</sup> Theodor Antropp, 'Der Festspielgedanke', *Mitteilungen der SFG*, 2, i (January 1919), 1–5 (p. 1).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

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Although Hofmannsthal's publicity material only consisted of half a dozen short essays written between 1919 and his death in 1929, it was this which did most to provide the Salzburg Festival with a distinct cultural profile. Realizing how important it was that the Festival should rise above the political debate concerning Austria's future, and at the same time avoid the sort of narrow Catholicism which would have encouraged critics to associate it with the Christian Social party, Hofmannsthal based his approach on a depoliticized notion of theatrical traditionalism. The main source of this was Josef Nadler's *Literaturgeschichte der deutschen Stämme und Landschaften*, three volumes of which had appeared by 1918. Politics plays little part in Nadler's account because he ascribes the variety of literary development within the German-speaking area to differences in regional geography and ethnic character. The south German tribes of Bavaria and Austria have, since time immemorial, been endowed with an unrivalled enthusiasm and talent for theatre, which can be attributed to tribal instinct and to geographical factors, especially the amphitheatrical structure of many south German valleys. Being situated on the border between Austria and Bavaria, Salzburg is the perfect site in which to celebrate and continue this tradition. Hofmannsthal's publicity material repeatedly paraphrases Nadler in this fashion, even quoting him directly in 'Festspiele in Salzburg' (1921).

Nadler's work is an extravagant piece of myth-making, condemned by many in the academic community as unscholarly, subjective and at times factually wrong; but Hofmannsthal loved it, became an enthusiastic propagandist after he had read Nadler's account of the Austrian Baroque in 1918, and immediately began to court the friendship of Nadler who, until 1925, was Professor of Literary History at the Catholic university of Fribourg (Switzerland).<sup>31</sup> Nadler's approach is reminiscent of Kralik insofar as he tended to force his material into a ready-made framework and was more concerned with the overall effect than with avoiding minor distortions which might occur in the process. Whereas Hofmannsthal condemned Kralik's lack of scholarly rigour, he wanted to believe in Nadler's work because it reassured him that the roots of his own creativity would not be affected by political upheavals. In the late 1920s he indeed noted:

Er [Nadler] hat die geistigen Leistungen auf ein letztes sie Bewirkendes zurückgeführt, das die Individuen überdauert und während sie historisch werden gegenwärtig bleibt wie das

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<sup>31</sup> See Volke, 'Hugo von Hofmannsthal und Josef Nadler in Briefen'.

## WORLD THEATRE IN SALZBURG

Dasein unserer Berge und Flüsse; man nenne das Mythologie — so ist es das faszinierendste und ermutigendste, die man sich denken kann. (RA3 149)

Thus one might argue that Hofmannsthal's essays on Salzburg resemble his festival plays insofar as, despite their public nature, they too are underpinned by essentially private concerns.

W.E. Yates has shown that, where the Austrian comic tradition was concerned, Nadler's work encouraged Hofmannsthal and generations of later commentators to form a false impression of his relation to what had gone before, to confuse his deliberate traditionalism, that fondness for adapting forms and materials from the past, with the idea of belonging to and continuing a living, organic tradition.<sup>32</sup> Something similar occurred with respect to Catholicism. In Hofmannsthal's reading of Nadler religion is reduced to a 'Grundstimmung' (RA3 147). What he writes about Grillparzer in 1922 reflects this view:

Der Seele nach war er [Grillparzer] ein Christ so gut wie Goethe und Schiller, denn es ist das Christentum, das unseren Seelen ihre Beschaffenheit und Bewußtheit gegeben hat. Zudem war er ein süddeutscher Katholik durch die Zugehörigkeit zu einer Lebensluft, die alle Poren durchdringt, und doppelt die seinen, der ein empfängliches Wesen war. (RA2 89)

This idea of religion by osmosis, which Hofmannsthal links to the peculiarly secularized Christianity of Weimar classicism, is clearly inappropriate to the situation of the First Austrian Republic, insofar as it fails to acknowledge the continuing importance of Catholicism as a spiritual and political force. Predictably, Hofmannsthal's naivety in this matter, which has serious repercussions for *Das Salzburger große Welttheater*, has clouded the vision of some commentators; most notably, Frederick Ritter writes: 'In der Kirche kann er den Traum vom ewigen Österreich, unbehindert durch die Wirklichkeit, weiterspinnen.'<sup>33</sup> The idea of Hofmannsthal blithely using the Catholic cultural heritage as a vehicle to reconstruct the Austria of his dreams and disregarding the political realities is disturbing but, ironically, perhaps not so far from the truth.

When it came to Catholic drama, Hofmannsthal's view was once again fanciful, insofar as he wanted to create the impression of reviving something

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<sup>32</sup> W.E. Yates, 'Hofmannsthal and the Austrian Comic Tradition', *Colloquia Germanica*, 15 (1982), 73–83.

<sup>33</sup> Frederick Ritter, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal und Österreich* (Heidelberg: Stiehm, 1967), p. 27.

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that was all but extinct, of taking up a torch that lay on the ground, glimmering but faintly. This is most evident in his presentation of the Oberammergau passion play. Although neither its popularity nor its immediate future was in doubt at the beginning of the twentieth century, and although it provided conservative Catholics with a shining example, Hofmannsthal presented it as 'ein ehrwürdiges Überbleibsel alter Kunstübung' (RA2 260), 'sozusagen das letzte Spitzchen eines versunkenen Inselkontinentes' (RA2 286). The only other passion play he mentions is that at Hörtitz, in farflung Bohemia (RA2 265). In reality, however, the early 1920s saw passion plays staged in numerous locations, with interrupted traditions being revived and new ones inaugurated. In 1922, for example, when both Erl and Oberammergau mounted their first productions after the War, a two-part passion play was also staged by professional actors in Vienna, to cater for those unable to leave the city, and Hörtitz, where the last production had taken place in 1912, took up its tradition again in 1923.

Only in his first contribution to the Salzburg myth, 'Deutsche Festspiele zu Salzburg', is Hofmannsthal honest about the selectivity of his traditionalism. The repertoire will include 'das Mysterium und das geistliche Spiel, soweit es sich mit Anstand auf die weltliche Bühne bringen läßt' (RA2 256). The key words are 'mit Anstand'; echoing the views of Max Mell, Hofmannsthal acknowledges that it is in the nature of this tradition for artistic standards to be secondary to the religious message, an approach which is not permissible on the professional stage. However, since all traditions are born at some time and can, as Hobsbawm has so persuasively argued, be reborn out of a selective traditionalism, this does not mean that Hofmannsthal's appropriation of the Catholic heritage is forever condemned to appear counterfeit, it merely has to establish itself in the popular imagination.<sup>34</sup> The fact that Hofmannsthal's is not the only claim on this legacy of course makes the venture far more difficult; but when he introduces the 1928 Salzburg Festival, he writes as if the tradition has already established itself, beginning, 'Das Programm der Salzburger Festspiele wechselt nicht' (RA3 187).

It is a weakness in Steinberg's account of the Festival that, by focusing so closely on Hofmannsthal, he is to some extent taken in by his interpretation of its cultural background and discusses neither the Catholic nor the socialist

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<sup>34</sup> See Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 1–14.

festival culture of the 1920s.<sup>35</sup> As a result he is unsure how to interpret Catholic opposition to the Salzburg Festival, attributing it on the one hand to anti-Semitism and concluding on the other that it is 'an interesting case in cultural psychology: [...] the rejection came from a recognition of the artificiality of the cultural pretensions of the festival, which were exactly the pretensions of the Austrian Catholic conservatives'.<sup>36</sup> Certainly, anti-Jewish sentiment played a part, and certainly there are similarities of method and aspiration between Salzburg and earlier Catholic ventures, without which figures such as Lux would not have become involved; but there is no need to be quite so speculative. I would maintain (and will again cite Lux as an example) that opposition mounted because many Catholic intellectuals had clear ideas about the way in which the Austrian tradition should be carried forward and came to see the Festival as inhibiting the development of a more genuinely Catholic and patriotic festival culture, the foundations of which had, of course, already been laid.

If one simply glances at the programme of the SFG alongside that of the Leo-Gesellschaft, one rapidly has a sense of *déjà vu*. Firstly, just as the Leo-Gesellschaft began with Kralik's *Weihnachtsspiel*, so Reinhardt intended to begin by staging Max Mell's adaptation of the *Halleiner Weihnachtsspiel* at the Franziskanerkirche. This was a cautious decision insofar as Mell, who published his text as *Ein altes deutsches Weihnachtsspiel* (1924), was an acknowledged Catholic dramatist, and nativity plays, with their appeal to sentimental Christianity, are the form of religious drama most readily accepted by the general public. The plan was abandoned because of financial difficulties, but one can imagine that the three performances for which the Archbishop of Salzburg gave permission would probably have been a success: like Mell's *Apostelspiel* the nativity play would have been extremely resistant to the 'Mirakel' treatment. Indeed, but for the fact that the use of dialect would have seemed disrespectful in the 1890s and that the society's aristocratic membership might have found it somewhat wearing, Mell's nativity play would not have been out of place in the repertoire of the Leo-Gesellschaft.

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<sup>35</sup> For a review which makes precisely this criticism see Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, 'The Ideology of the Salzburg Festival', in *Theatre and Performance in Austria: From Mozart to Jelinek*, ed. by Ritchie Robertson and Edward Timms, *Austrian Studies*, 4 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), pp. 171–76 (p. 174).

<sup>36</sup> Steinberg, *The Meaning of the Salzburg Festival*, p. 169.

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Secondly, Reinhardt's *Jedermann*, like the Leo-Gesellschaft's Calderón productions, used a carefully chosen outdoor setting in order to heighten the sacral atmosphere, and there was the same peculiar combination of elite audience and populist ideology. Furthermore, just as the 1897 production of *Das große Welttheater* raised money for good causes, so Hofmannsthal and Reinhardt tried to balance their professionalism with thrift and altruism. The planned nativity play would have been a charity event, and the actors involved in the premiere of *Jedermann* received souvenirs instead of payment. Hofmannsthal donated half of his royalties, and capital outlay was kept to a minimum by re-using the costumes from the 1911 Berlin production. It was a similar story with *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* in August 1922: in return for episcopal permission to stage the first dozen performances in the Kollegienkirche, the profits were donated to the church's repair fund.

That one can draw parallels between the early repertoire of the Salzburg Festival and that of the Leo-Gesellschaft is little recommendation; no doubt partly because the Catholic community had long abandoned the elitist approach and was uneasy about compromising with the ethos of the entertainment industry, conservative Catholics such as Joseph August Lux came to see the Salzburg Festival as a travesty of their cultural ideals. Lux gave a detailed account of Catholic grievances in two articles which appeared in the *Reichspost* in June 1926, with a later article in *Das Neue Reich* making similar points in the light of that year's productions. The bulk of his criticism concerns the cultural profile which Hofmannsthal has created for the Festival and the effect of Reinhardt's taste on the repertoire, both of which he regards as insufficiently Austrian. Whereas the Festival should have been 'ein Weihetempel österreichischer Kunst und ihrer hohen Traditionen', it has become 'die große schmerzliche Niete in unserem Kunstleben [...] ein Ableger der Reinhardtschen Theaterei'.<sup>37</sup> Lux argues that Reinhardt's directorial style, which for Hofmannsthal is quintessentially Austrian, still smacks of Berlin and is typified not by his *Jedermann* production (towards which Lux remained complimentary) but by Vollmoeller's *Mirakel*, which had found a place in the Salzburg repertoire in 1925. Reinhardt's grandiose 1926 production of Gozzi's *Turandot*, ominously also in an adaptation by Karl Vollmoeller, serves only to strengthen this argument. For Lux, Reinhardt is at best 'ein Arrangeur und Ausstattungs-

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<sup>37</sup> Joseph August Lux, 'Salzburger Festspielhaus im Spiegel der Kritik', *Reichspost*, 6 June 1926; reprinted in *Resonanz: 50 Jahre Kritik der Salzburger Festspiele*, ed. by Max Kaindl-Hönig (Salzburg: Salzburger Nachrichten Verlagsgesellschaft, 1971), pp. 29–33 (p. 29).

mensch, der sich wie kein anderer auf stoffliche und sinnliche Wirkung versteht. [...] Er ist der Meister der angewandten Kunst, die mit hohen Ideen nichts zu tun hat'.<sup>38</sup> Citing the eclecticism of the 1926 programme (which also included works by Goldoni and Pergolesi), Lux disputes the relevance of the *Commedia dell'arte* for the Austrian Baroque tradition and attacks Hofmannsthal's Nadler-inspired notions of the south German theatrical tradition as 'Kautschukbegriffe, die sich beliebig dehnen lassen'.<sup>39</sup>

Lux's criticisms are not without substance. Reinhardt exerted enormous influence on the Festival repertoire throughout the First Republic; and, thanks to his belief in the idea of Austria as a cultural melting-pot, all that Hofmannsthal definitely excluded was 'das Finstere ohne Hoffnung und Aufschwung, das innerlich Gewöhnliche, das völlig Weihelose' (RA3 186). In the view of many commentators this should certainly have disqualified *Das Mirakel*, the vulgar sensationalism of which sat uneasily alongside Mell's *Apostelspiel* and *Das Salzburger große Welttheater*. According to Lux, a more genuinely Austrian repertoire would have reflected the line of development running from the Baroque to Raimund and Grillparzer, thus reinforcing the image of Austria and its heritage which Chancellor Seipel was at the time promoting in speeches throughout Europe. Lux's references to Seipel make clear his underlying agenda: that the Festival's cultural ideology, rather than being apolitical, should be in line with that of the Christian Social party. Indeed, Lux repeatedly uses the term 'Sanierung' as he argues that the provincial government of Salzburg should not have given the Festival financial support without insisting on sweeping reforms.

As well as criticizing the Festival on directly patriotic grounds, the second of Lux's *Reichspost* articles lays bare what was probably the most heartfelt reason for his opposition: that a Festival with Hofmannsthal and Reinhardt at the helm was 'eine derzeit beliebige geistige Säkularisierung Oesterreichs'.<sup>40</sup> The accusation seems to be that, although the Festival draws on the Baroque heritage at every turn, Austria's living Catholic faith, which the clerical wing of the Christian Social party regarded as fundamental to the country's identity, was indeed watered down, its symbols and doctrinal formulations becoming the

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<sup>38</sup> Joseph August Lux, 'Über den möglichen Beruf der Salzburger Festspiele', *Das Neue Reich*, 4 (1926), 986–89 (p. 987).

<sup>39</sup> Joseph August Lux, 'Reinhardt-Festspiele in Salzburg und anderswo', *Die Quelle, Sonntag-Beiblatt der Reichspost für Literatur, Heimatkunde und Kultur*, 20 June 1926, pp. 17–18 (p. 17).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

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metaphorical means to convey an essentially personal, secular message. Certainly, as was shown in Chapter Five, *Jedermann* is open to such an interpretation and Hofmannsthal encouraged it. As far as the Festival as a whole is concerned, Kenneth Segar has demonstrated that the rejection of Vienna's Jewish-dominated cultural scene, its sacral character, and its exploitation of rural and *völkisch* traditions can all be seen as a 'genuflexion before reactionary Catholicism'.<sup>41</sup> However, it is equally possible (especially from a Catholic or an anti-Semitic point of view) to condemn that gesture as perfunctory and insincere. In that case one might conclude that Hofmannsthal wished to sacralize an image of Austria's cultural heritage in which the Catholic Baroque provided only aesthetic coloration. The difficulty of determining the focus and purpose of the Festival's sacral elements, of distinguishing between metaphor and metaphysics is at the heart of the Salzburg conundrum, a mixed blessing for the Festival itself and, as the next section will show, for the festival drama which Hofmannsthal wrote to be performed there.

### *'Das Salzburger große Welttheater'*

If at any time the Salzburg Festival looked like coming close to promoting the ideals of reactionary Catholicism, it was with the 1922 production of *Das Salzburger große Welttheater*: Hofmannsthal could hardly have chosen a model with a better Catholic pedigree than Calderón's spectacular Baroque drama *El gran teatro del mundo* and a setting more conducive to religious reverence than Fischer von Erlach's Kollegienkirche. However, it will be demonstrated in this section that, if one looks closely at Hofmannsthal's *Welttheater* and at its composition, one sees that his conservatism was from the outset accompanied by a desire to modernize and universalize. Although his free adaptation of *El gran teatro del mundo* is a consciously public drama, it nevertheless incorporates some of his most private concerns and has a good deal of continuity with his earlier works. As in *Der Tor und der Tod*, the authority of Death is challenged by a Faustian self-sufficiency, with a series of unrepentantly egocentric figures demanding freedom of action and the right to personal

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<sup>41</sup> Kenneth Segar, 'Austria in the Thirties: Reality and Exemplum', epilogue to *Austria in the Thirties: Culture and Politics*, ed. by Kenneth Segar and John Warren (Riverside, CA: Ariadne Press, 1991), pp. 359–77 (p. 362).

fulfilment. The richness of parallel and contrast between them is reminiscent of *Das kleine Welttheater*, the difference being that, since actors in the great theatre of the world engage in dialogue with each other, conflict arises, and with it a more sociological perspective.

Although Hofmannsthal ultimately upholds the sense of order depicted by the Baroque allegory as being preferable to the chaos of revolution, the specifically Catholic content of Calderón's play is hollowed out by the Neo-Platonic attitude which is, to a large extent, the basis of Hofmannsthal's mature poetics and which, within the context of the *theatrum mundi*, blends extremely effectively with the Catholic world-view. The result is a multi-faceted but deeply problematic text which cannot be fully understood unless it is interpreted from a number of perspectives. This discussion will therefore aim to achieve that balance and breadth of outlook which is lacking in many accounts.<sup>42</sup> *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* will be examined both as a festival drama drawing on the heritage of the Counter-Reformation and against the background of Hofmannsthal's earlier literary work, paying particular attention to the influence of Neo-Platonic thought. Comparison between Hofmannsthal's text and its Calderonian model will be complemented by an investigation of other sources on which he drew, especially *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen*.<sup>43</sup> It will be possible to highlight aspects of Hofmannsthal's modernity by setting his text alongside Kralik's *Das große Theater der Welt*, an abridged version of the same *auto* which was written in 1926 and performed in Vienna as part of the 1928 *Osterfestspiele*. The final part of this section will consider whether *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* did indeed remain a

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<sup>42</sup> Aspects of the relationship between Hofmannsthal's text and *El gran teatro del mundo* are considered from a narrow literary perspective in the following: Helmut Wocke, 'Hugo von Hofmannsthal's "Salzburger großes Welttheater": Ein Beitrag zur Nachwirkung Calderóns', *Wirkendes Wort*, 1 (1950–51), 264–72; Clemens Heselhaus, 'Calderón und Hofmannsthal: Sinn und Form des theologischen Dramas', in *Calderón de la Barca*, ed. by Hans Flasche, *Wege der Forschung*, 158 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971), pp. 257–90; Peter Michelsen, 'Das "Große Welttheater" bei Pedro Calderón und Hugo von Hofmannsthal', in *Pedro Calderón de la Barca: Vorträge anlässlich der Jahrestagung der Görres-Gesellschaft 1978*, ed. by Theodor Berchem and Siegfried Sudhof (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1983), pp. 29–47. Coghlan, *Hofmannsthal's Festival Dramas*, pp. 150–83 provides a sympathetic account of *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* in the light of Hofmannsthal's cultural politics, while Arnold Bergstraesser, 'The Holy Beggar: Religion and Society in Hugo von Hofmannsthal's "Great World Theatre of Salzburg"', *Germanic Review*, 20 (1945), 261–86, considers the play in the context of Hofmannsthal's development and relies heavily on the interpretative framework of 'Ad me ipsum'.

<sup>43</sup> An outline of Calderón's *El gran teatro del mundo* has been given in the third section of Chapter Four.

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Catholic drama, or whether the modernist impulse asserted itself over more traditional interpretations.

The idea of adapting *El gran teatro del mundo* was mooted in the summer of 1919, when Hofmannsthal and Reinhardt began to work out a programme for Salzburg. Since they were keen to revive forms of festival drama which could claim to be part of national or local tradition, 'Spanien, das in gewissem Sinne zur österreichischen Geschichte dazu gehört' (RA2 410) and Calderón, for Hofmannsthal 'diese höchste Auswirkung des barocken Theatergeistes' (RA2 256), were clear frontrunners. However, the initial impulse came from Reinhardt, who seems to have regarded it as a director's dream to stage that particular play in the Kollegienkirche. In October 1921 Hofmannsthal wrote to Emil Ronsperger:

Eben um jenen Barockraum, nicht um irgend einen Raum oder um irgend eine Kirche geht es ihm [Reinhardt], sondern eben um dieses eine prächtige Gebäude, [...] eben darum hat er mich gebeten, die von mir nach jahrelanger Überlegung fast wieder aufgegebene schwere Arbeit einer völlig freien deutschen Nachdichtung des Calderón'schen Welttheaters auf mich zu nehmen. (W10 197)

Despite Hofmannsthal's reservations, he was quickly won over, perhaps realizing that he could use Calderón's text to make a statement about the contemporary situation, or perhaps attracted more simply by the opportunity to formulate yet again and in a more poignant setting than ever before the idea of life as theatre. Putting other projects aside, he took up Eichendorff's translation and was soon engrossed. Although the literary adaptation was Hofmannsthal's, he discussed it with Reinhardt at every stage, increasingly conceiving it not only for the Kollegienkirche but also for a specific cast. Indeed, his long-established practice of giving private readings of his works and inviting criticism during the process of composition here became an ideologically desirable means of drumming up support for the Festival: 'Man muss für eine Sache, die auf Viele, ja auf Alle wirken soll, Viele und Verschiedene zu Mitarbeitern machen' (W10 195).

It is impossible to know how far Hofmannsthal was aware that the particular Corpus Christi play he was presuming to reclaim for the Salzburg repository of Austro-German culture had already been central to the Catholic cultural revival of the 1890s and was, in the minds of many Austrians, inseparable from the clerical conservatism which had come to dominate national politics in the meantime. Hofmannsthal certainly mentions Calderón in 1901 in his

*Habilitationsschrift* on Victor Hugo (RA1 255) but must have been familiar with *El gran teatro del mundo* when he wrote *Das kleine Welttheater* four years earlier, possibly as a result of seeing the Leo-Gesellschaft production discussed in Chapter Four; in 1902 he begins a verse adaptation of *La vida es sueño*, the first of several plans involving Calderón, and in 1903 he mentions 'die in der Erfindung wundervollen "autos" von Calderon' (W9 235). The only completed adaptation prior to the *Welttheater* is the comedy *Dame Kobold* (*La Dama duende*), staged by Reinhardt in 1920. The first version of *Der Turm*, a more original reworking of *La vida es sueño*, then appears in 1924, followed by a revised version two years later. Despite this sustained interest, Schwarz identifies 'eine von Calderon sich distanzierende Haltung' in Hofmannsthal's references to the Spanish dramatist, a defensiveness which may well be due to the political sensitivity of his works.<sup>44</sup> This is evident in 1918, when he tells Andrian of his plan to produce a Calderón cycle for the Burgtheater but entreats him not to mention it to Bahr: 'Er würde hier sofort sagen, die Idee sei gut, aber es sei absurd wenn ich das mache, Kralik sei der Mensch, dem das gehöre.'<sup>45</sup> By this time, however, Hofmannsthal was prepared to compete for what he regarded as a valuable part of Europe's Baroque heritage.

It seems to be an attempt to distance himself from Calderón and liberate his *Welttheater* from narrow clerical interpretations that Hofmannsthal uses a perspective derived from Nadler to define the relation between his adaptation and its Calderonian model. He rehearses this when the *Welttheater* appears in his *Neue Deutsche Beiträge*: although Hofmannsthal concedes his debt to the Catholic tradition, he reduces it to the last item in a list of impressionistic affinities: 'in Zeichen und Gestalten erinnert hier vieles an vieles: an Bauwerke, Gemälde, steinerne und hölzerne Bildwerke, an die Bräuche und volkstümlichen theatralischen Darbietungen im südlichen katholischen Deutschland, wo eine unzerspaltene Erinnerung hinfließt bis ans Mittelalter' (RA2 199–200). A refined version of this disclaimer prefaces the book edition and is reproduced in Hofmannsthal's third 'Wiener Brief' (1923). Since he set so much store by the formulation, it warrants being cited in full here:

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<sup>44</sup> Egon Schwarz, *Hofmannsthal und Calderon*, Harvard Germanic Studies, 3 ('s-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1962), p. 9.

<sup>45</sup> Hofmannsthal – Andrian, *Briefwechsel*, p. 276: Hofmannsthal to Andrian, letter of 30 August 1918.

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Daß es ein geistliches Schauspiel von Calderon gibt, mit Namen 'Das große Welttheater', weiß alle Welt. Von diesem ist hier die das Ganze tragende Metapher entlehnt: daß die Welt ein Schaugerüst aufbaut, worauf die Menschen in ihren von Gott ihnen zugeteilten Rollen das Spiel des Lebens aufführen; ferner der Titel dieses Spiels und die Namen der sechs Gestalten, durch welche die Menschheit vorgestellt wird — sonst nichts. Diese Bestandteile aber eignen nicht dem großen katholischen Dichter als seine Erfindung, sondern gehören zu dem Schatz von Mythen und Allegorien, die das Mittelalter ausgeformt und den späteren Jahrhunderten übermacht hat. (W10 unnumbered page at front of volume)

This raises a number of points. Firstly, where does this universal familiarity come from, given that neither the Romantics nor any subsequent generation of translators and theatre directors managed to create a 'German Calderón' as they did a 'German Shakespeare', and that the *autos sacramentales* had always made less impact than the secular plays? Its only reasonable source within Austria can be those sections of the Catholic intelligentsia who had followed Kralik's lead and spread Calderón's fame amongst ordinary people, by encouraging them to read and perform his work; if this is so, initial responses to Hofmannsthal's play are guaranteed to be coloured by religious affinity and political allegiance.

The manner in which Hofmannsthal focuses on the metaphor itself does little to discourage conventional Catholic interpretations. Whereas he might have said that the idea of the world as a theatre stresses the transience of human life and posits the existence of a transcendental realm, the statement: 'daß die Welt ein Schaugerüst aufbaut, worauf die Menschen in ihren von Gott ihnen zugeteilten Rollen das Spiel des Lebens aufführen' immediately suggests, for all but the most obtuse, the fixed hierarchical structure of the medieval *Gottesstaat*. Furthermore, anyone who knows Calderón's play must expect Hofmannsthal's version to be even more conservative, for the implication, if he has retained the title of the inner action, in Eichendorff's translation, 'Tue recht — Gott über euch', is that Christian moral standards still apply, along with the principle of divine judgement.<sup>46</sup> It is also significant that Hofmannsthal should have used King, Rich Man, Wisdom, Beauty, Peasant and Beggar as his summation of the forces in society, rather than substituting or adding other figures. As he once mused in a letter to Alfred Roller, 'der Gelehrte' or 'der Beamte' might have been appropriate additions for twentieth-century Austria, had he not needed a large measure of traditionalism to give the impression of an ancient principle of order (W10 207).

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<sup>46</sup> Eichendorff, *Neue Gesamtaufgabe der Werke und Schriften*, III, 332.

Hofmannsthal's final assertion that the world theatre metaphor is not exclusively Catholic property is obviously a Nadler-style thesis suggesting that he can borrow this much from Calderón without himself operating as a Catholic dramatist. In the abstract, his argument has some justification. As Curtius has pointed out, the *theatrum mundi* topos reached the Middle Ages via both pagan antiquity and Christian writers.<sup>47</sup> Its presence both in the mystical traditions derived from Neo-Platonism and in diverse Christian writings not only guarantees it a place in that treasure trove of myths and allegories which is available to every late generation, but also encourages a productive intermingling of Christian and pagan.<sup>48</sup> This occurs to a small extent in Calderón, and Hofmannsthal draws on other sources to produce a thought-provoking syncretistic treatment of the theocentric world theatre. Although the metaphor was as commonplace at the time Hofmannsthal was writing as in Calderón's day, the events of the 1930s prove that it was not, as Benjamin Bennett claims, 'worn out, used up by history', and not therefore politically neutral; and if this is true of the metaphor in general, it is even more so of *El gran teatro del mundo*.<sup>49</sup> The innovation of *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* must therefore be considered not only in poetic and dramatic terms but also with regard to its capacity to overcome the Catholic pedigree of Calderón's world theatre.

As if determined to establish a measure of artistic independence, Hofmannsthal makes most free with his model in the opening scenes of *Das Salzburger große Welttheater*, creating a substantial framework within which the metatheatrical interaction of the six figures then takes place as a play-within-a-play. This allows him to establish the philosophical and theological basis of his work largely on his own terms and to explore the central metaphor in a way that is lively enough to capture the interest of a modern audience but leisurely enough to allow mastery of its details. Hofmannsthal opens with a question, 'Wohin führst du mich?' (W10 9). The speaker, Frau Welt (the World), offers herself as a guide for those spectators who, like herself, may be entering unfamiliar territory, an area possibly not to their taste, and may, also like her,

<sup>47</sup> Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter*, p. 146.

<sup>48</sup> This is argued with most conviction in Johann Sofer, *Die Welttheater Hugo von Hofmannsthal und ihre Voraussetzungen bei Heraklit und Calderon*, Vorträge und Abhandlungen der österreichischen Leogesellschaft, 37 (Vienna: Mayer, 1934). Relying heavily on Nadler, this is one of few discussions which places Hofmannsthal in a tradition including Kralik.

<sup>49</sup> Bennett, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal*, p. 297. Bennett's interpretation is extremely philosophical and gives no consideration to the Catholic cultural background.

be a little slow to grasp new ideas. To that end, what in Calderón are intimations, quiet remarks likely to pass unnoticed, here become anxious questions, or even severe logistical problems. For example, in Calderón's text the Master remarks briefly that he allocates the roles in this play since all would, if given the choice, want to occupy positions of power and not realize 'Daß auf dieser Bühnenwelt, / Was er für das Leben hält, / Eben nur ein Schauspiel sei'.<sup>50</sup> In Hofmannsthal's *Welttheater* this becomes the subject of a hysterical outburst by Frau Welt: 'Eine undankbare Rolle wird mir jeder vor die Füße schmeißen und mich eine böse Stiefmutter, eine Schinderin und was noch für Namen nennen!' (W10 14). The Master's reminder that it is only a play provides no immediate enlightenment, and the Angel charged to explain more simply does so in a tone of incredulity: 'Bist du so schwer von Begriffen? Anschaffen und gehorchen, sich aufrecken und sich ducken, prassen und entbehren, das alles geschieht von denen, die im Spiel stehen: gleichnisweise aber geschieht es und nicht für wirklich' (W10 15). The most naive spectators are thus carried along by their intellectual superiority over several of those on stage.

In Hofmannsthal's text, as in Calderón's, the Master summons the World and orders her to stage a play reflecting the theatrical nature of human life. Calderón's dialogue, which is dominated by lengthy poetic speeches reliving the miracle of creation and extolling the beauty of the natural world, reveals no disharmony between creator and created. Hofmannsthal makes this relationship a good deal more complex; his Frau Welt is not merely the faithful servant and has a more defined and dissenting character. Consequently, the *Blick hinter den Kulissen*, so beloved of turn-of-the-century drama, is a good deal more chaotic than the efficient co-operation of director and stage-manager in Calderón's play. The Master's request that Frau Welt should prepare 'ein Fest und Schauspiel' (W10 10) meets with incomprehension because she does not associate mankind with his desire to see 'ein lebendes, geheimes freies Wirken' (W10 11). The ensuing dispute develops two contrasting views of human life, both of which can be traced back via later literary sources to the dual perspective of Genesis: mankind as the pinnacle of creation and therefore essentially good; and fallen Man, accursed by God, plagued by intellectual imprudence and unable to rise above his baser self.

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<sup>50</sup> Eichendorff, *Neue Gesamtausgabe der Werke und Schriften*, III, 329.

The most famous formulation of this duality in German literature is Goethe's *Faust* which, here as in *Der Tor und der Tod* and in *Jedermann*, is vitally important in determining how Hofmannsthal gives modern resonance to the theocentric world theatre. In Goethe's 'Prolog im Himmel' the Lord, like the Master in Hofmannsthal's *Welttheater*, presents a positive view of human striving. The counter-view is, of course, put forward by Mephistopheles. The irreverence of Frau Welt's opening speeches in the *Welttheater* is immediately reminiscent of the devil's stance in Goethe's 'Prolog', and further parallels can be found in her emphasis on destruction as opposed to creation, in her failure to comprehend either the mind of God or that of the race made in his image, and in her cynical attitude towards human reason. There are also unmistakable echoes of Mephistopheles' cicada image in the insect metaphors with which Frau Welt characterizes Man:

Die Menschen? an den Käfern willst du dich ergetzen? Wie Ameisen laufen sie hin und her, vorwärts und rückwärts, bauen Städte, gründen Reiche, zerstören s' wieder, lassen keinen Stein auf dem anderen. In einem Schwarm Wespen ist mehr Vernunft als in denen. (W10 11)

Frau Welt recommends that Man should rein in his intellectual ambitions, abandon his impossible dreams, and be content to enjoy the beauty of the earth and the pleasures that are readily available. Her view does not prevail, for there is more to Man than meets the worldly eye; in his striving lies his grandeur. As the Master explains to Frau Welt: 'In dem, worin du sie nicht fassst, ist ihr Großes: denn wisse, nach meinem Ebenbilde habe ich sie geschaffen' (W10 11).

Goethe's *Weltgedicht* operates as a shorthand which helps the spectator to identify the basis of the dispute between Frau Welt and the Master. Noting that such echoes become far less prominent in the latter part of the play, Schwarz has concluded this to be because the Faustian world-view is subordinated to that of Counter-Reformation Catholicism.<sup>51</sup> However, Hofmannsthal made clear that this was not his intention in a letter to Richard Strauss, written after the latter had criticized the 'katholisch dogmatische Gebundenheit' of *Das Salzburger große Welttheater*:

Es ist in dem Gedicht freilich ein religiöses Element, wie auch im 'Faust'—, auch ein christliches, denn das Christentum zusammen mit der Antike ist, worauf wir alle ruhen —

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<sup>51</sup> Schwarz, *Hofmannsthal und Calderon*, examines Hofmannsthal's debt to Goethe pp. 76–87.

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aber katholisch gebunden ists so wenig als der 'Jedermann', ja ist im Innersten noch viel freier als der. [...] Der innerste Kern ist Verherrlichung jenes Hohen in uns, der inneren Freiheit, die gleichbedeutend ist dem Schöpferischen und Abglanz des höchsten Schöpfers [...]. (W10 214–15)

Whilst not denying that he is drawing on the Christian tradition, Hofmannsthal argues that this is merely a cultural basis and necessarily combined with pagan elements. As in Goethe's *Faust*, the inner core of meaning is strongly secular, stressing the divinity of Man and his unassailable freedom. This suggests that Hofmannsthal's ambition was effectively to write a modern Austrian *Faust*, a work that would use Christian imagery in order to convey a moral message relevant to the situation of the fragile Republic.

At the time of writing *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* Hofmannsthal's image of Goethe's *Faust* was strongly influenced by Konrad Burdach's essay 'Faust und Moses' (1912). Since this is the source of the quotation from Gregory of Nyssa which introduces 'Ad me ipsum', it is certain that he read it some time before 1916. In 1920 he told Burdach:

Die Schrift 'Faust und Moses' habe ich nun, ich glaube zum vierten Mal mit der grössten Aufmerksamkeit von der ersten bis zur letzten Zeile gelesen und mich nicht weniger als bei einer der früheren Lesungen dadurch angeregt, in manchen Gedanken geklärt und vielfältig bereichert. (W16/I 152)

For Burdach and, it seems, for Hofmannsthal, *Faust* was a work in which a number of traditions were synthesized. Burdach not only identified Neo-Platonic features in Faust's final vision but also argued that this element enabled Goethe to model the titanic individual of the second part on Moses, as he is depicted in Jewish legend. Therefore, even though, as Atkins has shown, *Faust: Der Tragödie zweiter Teil* draws heavily on Calderonian imagery, verse forms, stage sets, and sound and lighting effects, it does not conclude with anything like a Calderonian redemption.<sup>52</sup> Rather, Burdach argues that Goethe's model is the founder of the Jewish state, over whose soul good and evil forces are also said to have fought:

Faust gleich dem Begründer des nationalen jüdischen Staates, dem Gesetzgeber und Bildner der sittlich-religiösen Existenz des jüdischen Volkes, dem Bevollmächtigten und Sprecher Gottes, dem priesterlichen Führer Israels stirbt auf der Höhe eines titanischen Lebens, von

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<sup>52</sup> Stuart Atkins, 'Goethe, Calderón and "Faust: Zweiter Teil"', *Germanic Review*, 28 (1953), 83–98.

Gott gerufen, von Gott bestattet; er sieht das Land der Verheißung zum Greifen vor sich, aber er selbst kommt nicht hinein, und im Scheiden denkt er nicht mehr an sich, sondern der kommenden Geschlechter, denen er ein Gesetz sittlichen Lebens hinterläßt.<sup>53</sup>

Goethe's *Faust* was not the only source on which Hofmannsthal drew in his attempt to update Calderón's world theatre. A second major influence, overlooked by commentators so far, was Johannes von Tepl's *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen*.<sup>54</sup> Written early in the fifteenth century, when the medieval world-view was beginning to be pushed aside by a new humanism, *Der Ackermann* presents a dispute in which the title figure, grieving over the loss of his beloved wife, challenges the authority of Death. As the argument progresses, two diametrically opposed views of the value of human life and of the meaning of death emerge. The personification of Death adopts a stance akin to that of Frau Welt (in Hofmannsthal's world theatre Death is, significantly, part of her entourage). He justifies the transience of earthly life by pointing out the baseness of fallen Man, conceived in sin, born in pathetic nakedness and forever incapable of rising above his innate wretchedness. For the Ploughman, by contrast, Man is God's masterpiece, created in a timeless paradise and therefore unjustly exposed to the tyranny of time and Death. Johannes resolves their dispute by divine judgement. God tells both participants that they have forgotten their proper limits: Death has unlawfully claimed the power to achieve total annihilation, whilst the Ploughman has lost sight of his mortality. In reality, he tells them, Man must surrender his life to Death, his body to the earth, and his soul to God. Thus comforted and enlightened, the Ploughman concludes the text with a moving prayer for the soul of his wife.

An edition of *Der Ackermann*, then practically unknown, was produced by Alois Bernt and Konrad Burdach in 1917. Hofmannsthal, who described it as 'die erste Textausgabe eines der bedeutendsten Werke unserer Literatur aus der mittleren Zeit', had a copy in his library and appears from his underlinings to have read both the text and Burdach's generous commentary, which he found 'unvergleichlich' (RA2 506). Against the final chapter he wrote the reading

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<sup>53</sup> Konrad Burdach, 'Faust und Moses', *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Philosophisch-historische Klasse* (1912), pp. 358–403, 627–59, 736–89 (p. 360).

<sup>54</sup> Bergstraesser, 'The Holy Beggar: Religion and Society in Hugo von Hofmannsthal's "Great World Theatre of Salzburg"', mentions *Der Ackermann* in a footnote but does not consider it as a source (p. 266, note 22).

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date IX 21 (see W10 226). On 5 October of that year, when he was working out the detailed plan for his *Welttheater*, he told Paul Zifferer:

Das Verhältnis einerseits zum Calderon'schen Vorbild, dem ich unendlich treu bleibe, und von dem ich doch unendlich abweiche, ist merkwürdig [...]. Ich mache das, was ich den Rahmen nenne, in einer sehr festen Prosa, angelehnt an ein herrliches deutsches Dichtwerk des XVten (das Streitgespräch des Ackermannes mit dem Tod), doch keineswegs archaisierend, die Anlehnung ist eine ganz geistige [...]. (W10 195–96)

'Streitgespräch' is an apt term to describe the structure and atmosphere both of Hofmannsthal's framework and, as he himself pointed out in a different letter (see W10 219–20), of the later dispute between the Beggar and Rich Man. Hofmannsthal's lively but subtly textured prose, worlds away from Calderón's measured verse, also owes a debt to the colourful, hard-hitting speeches of *Der Ackermann*.<sup>55</sup> What is more, the substance of the debate is remarkably similar and therefore worthy of closer analysis.

Hofmannsthal twice quotes from *Der Ackermann* in his notes to the *Welttheater* (W10 151–52). As well as considering a number of formulations from the Ploughman's final prayer as a model for the dialogues between Frau Welt and the Master, he makes the following note:

ad Welttheater Rahmen  
Burdach III, 325

engel, teufel — das sind Geister in Gottes twangwesen: der Mensch ist das allerfreieste Gottes Werkstück. (W10 151)

The page reference is to Burdach's commentary on the lines cited. They appear in Chapter 25, where the Ploughman puts forward his vision of Man's godlike nobility. The full quotation is as follows (Hofmannsthal must have noted it from memory):

Engel, teufel, schretlein, clagemuter, das sint geiste in gotes twangwesen: der mensche ist das aller achtberest, das aller behendest vnd das aller freieste gotes werkstück. Im selber

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<sup>55</sup> Interestingly, stage adaptations of *Der Ackermann* were produced for the Catholic *Laienspiel* movement in the 1920s, and Hermann Bahr immediately recognized its dramatic potential, concluding his review of Burdach's edition, 'Max Reinhardt, hier harret des Erweckers ein Werk von ungeheurer Gewalt, rührender Anmut und der tiefsten Weisheit!'; Bahr, 'Der Ackermann aus Böhmen', in Bahr, *Bilderbuch* (Vienna and Leipzig: Wiener literarische Anstalt, 1921), pp. 203–08 (p. 208). On stage adaptations see B. [Hans Brečka], 'Der Ackermann und der Tod', *Der Kunstgarten*, 1 (1923), pp. 18–20.

geleiche hat es got gebildet, als er auch selber in der ersten wurkunge der werlte hat gesprochen.<sup>56</sup>

What particularly interests Hofmannsthal is the nature of human freedom, described in the medieval text as qualitatively different from that of angels and spirits: Man alone is made in the image of God and endowed with a spark of his divine, creative independence. Burdach's note points out that this distinction originates in Hermetic thought, the story being that, whereas the angels bowed down before Man, Satan and his host refused to acknowledge his special status and were cast out of heaven as a punishment. For Hofmannsthal, Man's privileged status is accompanied by the moral duty to make a right choice between good and evil; since he refuses to be a mere puppet, he must imitate God by engaging in productive action: 'Die Tat allein ist Schöpfung über der Schöpfung' (W10 21). This is, of course, a recurrent theme in Hofmannsthal's work; it is precisely where Claudio failed in *Der Tor und der Tod* and is very nearly the Beggar's downfall.<sup>57</sup>

When one thinks of freedom in socio-political terms, the ideals of the French Revolution readily spring to mind: liberty, equality and fraternity. During the First World War Hofmannsthal came to the conclusion that these were failed ideals, that it was time to establish 'einen neuen geläuterten Freiheitsbegriff' (RA2 33). *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* is part of the campaign for this, redefining all three elements of the revolutionary dream in such a way as to warn against a repetition of 1789 and posit a form of community where they may be achieved without massive upheaval and without the nation turning its back on centuries of tradition.

Liberty, equality and fraternity come into play as soon as the process of allocating roles begins. A crowd of unborn souls is called onto the stage, an angel picks out those who are destined to take part in the play of life and gives each a parchment bearing details of his or her role. King, Rich Man, Beauty,

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<sup>56</sup> *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen*, ed. by Alois Bernt and Konrad Burdach, Vom Mittelalter zur Reformation: Forschungen zur Geschichte der deutschen Bildung, III/i (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1917), p. 58. 'Burdach III' in Hofmannsthal's note refers to its place in the series 'Vom Mittelalter zur Reformation', of which Burdach was overall editor. Burdach also produced a two-part commentary volume: Burdach, *Der Dichter des Ackermann aus Böhmen und seine Zeit*, Vom Mittelalter zur Reformation, III/ii, 2 vols (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1926–32).

<sup>57</sup> For an interpretation of *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* focusing on the theme of 'die Tat' see Erwin Kobel, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1970), pp. 231–53.

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Wisdom and Farmer are all satisfied with their lot; only the Beggar demurs.<sup>58</sup> He does not want a life of shame, suffering and deprivation but 'eine Rolle, in der Freiheit ist' (W10 21). The Devil intervenes on his behalf, demanding 'natürliche Gleichheit des Schicksals' in his usual mock-legal idiom. Although the phrase has a certain ring, total equality is patently unnatural and unworkable in practice, since it would suppress personality, deny the individual a unique social function, and place excessive emphasis on the material aspects of life.

From the Devil's perspective, fraternity is also a by-word for injustice. As evidence he cites the biblical example of Jacob and Esau, twin sons of Isaac. Although the younger, Jacob, persuaded his brother to sell his birthright and tricked their father into giving him the elder son's blessing, he remained God's chosen one and went on to found the tribe of Israel. However, as the Angel suggests when he says 'Seine Flamme brannte dunkel und rauchig' (W10 20), right was not entirely on the side of Esau; he had committed the initial wrong action when he foolishly agreed to exchange his birthright, the gift with which he had come into the world, for something as worthless as a bowl of stew. The fate of Esau therefore contains both an incitement for the disinherited Beggar to reclaim what has been stolen from him and a warning that in so doing he may inadvertently throw away a possession of far greater value.

How is the Beggar persuaded to take such an uncongenial part? Frau Welt tries to bully him into acceptance by accusing him of cowardice that would shame an animal, but to no avail. In line with the dual perspective already established, the Angel takes a more conciliatory approach, praising the soul's bravery in confronting the misery which awaits him and saying that no one should have to live like that. What ultimately sways the 'heldenhafte Seele' (W10 21) is the reminder that Christ once took on earthly form and with it the sin and suffering of the whole human race. That he is in effect following in Christ's footsteps is a humbling thought but one that ultimately gives the Beggar the strength to make his own heroic sacrifice.

The way in which the genesis of human life is depicted in *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* is Neo-Platonic rather than explicitly Christian. In place of the orthodox view that God creates the human soul out of nothing at the moment of conception, Hofmannsthal postulates the pre-existence of the soul.

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<sup>58</sup> The designation 'Farmer' is preferred to the more usual term of 'Peasant', since in Hofmannsthal's play he is clearly intended to be well above the poverty line.

Echoes of this doctrine, which was part of popular faith during medieval times and was long tolerated by the Church, remain in Calderón's text, not least because it is theatrically effective to hand out costumes on stage. In his play, however, only those who will take part in the play of life are seen, rather than a large, hymn-singing crowd. The important point is that, by assuming the pre-existence of the soul, it is possible to bypass the Fall; Man comes to earth by a quasi-divine act of will and works his way back to God through the goodness of his soul. In Calderón's text, the Master's announcement, 'Frei nun ist / Euer Wille und bereitet / Steht die Bühne' signals the point at which life begins;<sup>59</sup> and Hofmannsthal's Beggar, reminded of Christ's words, 'Aber nicht mein, sondern dein Wille geschehe', gives his assent with 'Ich will, kleidet mich an!' (W10 22).

The myth that Man comes to Earth of his own volition is precisely that of the Platonic fantasia *Offenbarung* which was the first product of Kralik's fascination with the world theatre metaphor. One inspiration for Hofmannsthal's attempted synthesis of this and the theology of the Catholic festival play was very probably *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen*, where the connection between free, godlike Man and the Platonic doctrine of the soul's pre-existence is also explicit.<sup>60</sup> In his defence of life, beauty, love and pleasure, the Ploughman pointedly introduces Plato as an authority challenging the power of Death.

Ir sprecht, wie alle irdisch wesen vnd leben sullen ende nemen: so spricht Plato vnd ander weissagen, das in allen sachen eines zerruttunge des andern geberunge sei vnd wie alle sache auf vrkunfte sint gebawet vnd wie des himels lauf vnd der erden alle von einem in das ander verwandelt wurkunge ewig sei.<sup>61</sup>

God's verdict that the soul must return to him once the body dies admits this circular movement, allowing the Ploughman to pray confidently in the final chapter (to which Hofmannsthal paid close attention) that his wife's soul will return to its starting-point and dwell once again 'in deinem reiche bei den

<sup>59</sup> Eichendorff, *Neue Gesamtausgabe der Werke und Schriften*, III, 333.

<sup>60</sup> Konrad Burdach, 'Platonische, freireligiöse und persönliche Züge im "Ackermann aus Böhmen"', *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Philosophisch-historische Klasse* (1933), pp. 610–74; repr. in *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen des Johannes von Tepl und seine Zeit*, ed. by Ernst Schwarz, *Wege der Forschung*, 143 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968), pp. 148–238. Part of this material was given as a lecture in 1921 and Bahr also mentions one given as early as December 1915. See Bahr, 'Der Ackermann aus Böhmen', p. 207.

<sup>61</sup> *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen*, pp. 77–78.

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ewigen seligen geisten'.<sup>62</sup> It will be clear later that this Platonic principle, like that of the 'Streitgespräch', is a major inspiration for Hofmannsthal's presentation of the Beggar.

Before examining the interaction between the six representative figures, it is worth considering how Hofmannsthal's adaptation looks alongside the abridged version of Eichendorff's translation which Kralik produced for the Christlich-deutsche Volksbühne in 1926. Certainly, the preface to Kralik's manuscript is far less impressionistic than Hofmannsthal's prefatory paragraph, placing his work firmly in the tradition of Catholic amateur drama and making no claim to have done more than abridge the text.

Im Jahre 1897 habe ich dies Auto von Calderon in der vollständigen Übersetzung von Eichendorff mit einer von mir dazu komponierten Musik zu Wien im großen Arkadenhof des Rathauses aufführen lassen. Dies gab den Anstoß zu einer weitgreifenden Bewegung auf diesem Gebiet. Es bildeten sich Calderongesellschaften in München und Berlin; ich hatte Gelegenheit, bald noch andere Autos zu bearbeiten; auch von anderer Seite erschienen Bearbeitungen. [...] In Wien hat sich seit ein paar Jahren die Übung eingebürgert, am Fronleichnamstag im Anschluß an die Prozession vor den Kirchen solche Spiele aufzuführen. Für diesen Zweck war bei den Bearbeitungen eine starke Kürzung notwendig. Das gilt auch von der vorliegenden Bearbeitung.<sup>63</sup>

Just as Hofmannsthal's Salzburg propaganda ignores the *Laienspiel* movement, so Kralik makes no mention of Hofmannsthal and the Festival. In accordance with the limitations of a half-hour performance given in the open air, Kralik reduces Eichendorff's translation to a third of its original length. Everything that is not absolutely essential to the central metaphor is cut: the lyrical passages in which the beauty of the world is evoked, the humour in the role of the Peasant, as well as the sonnets with which the King and Beauty bid farewell to life. What remains is an uncompromising message expressed in harsh terms. One must wonder, as with Brecht's *Lehrstücke*, what sort of impact it would have on an audience. Do people prefer to be told, as in the sixth line of Kralik's adaptation (moved forward from line 46 of Eichendorff's translation) that the play is being staged 'da nur ein Spiel ja alles Menschen-

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<sup>62</sup> *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen*, p. 92.

<sup>63</sup> Kralik, 'Das große Theater der Welt: Ein geistliches Festspiel nach Calderon und Eichendorff', manuscript in the Handschriftensammlung of the Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek, I.N. 95882, dated 18 June 1926, 22 pages (p. 1). The text was published with only minor alterations but without this preface in *Der Kunstgarten*, 5 (1926–27), 223–29. References will henceforth be to this edition.

leben',<sup>64</sup> or because, in the words of Hofmannsthal's Master, 'Der Menschen Tun und Treiben ist mir zum Schauspiel würdig' (W10 12)? The latter is a far more uplifting proposition.

The treatment of comedy is also significant. Calderón's only comic character is the Peasant who predicts at the outset that he, like his forebear Adam, will be 'wohl der schlechteste Komödiant' and continues with humorous asides, mainly on the subject of taxation;<sup>65</sup> Kralik outlaws comedy altogether; with the exception of the Farmer's clumsy attempts to evade Death, Hofmannsthal shifts the comic focus from the figures of the central action to those at the periphery — Frau Welt, Vorwitz and the Devil. In the text performed in the Kollegienkirche, the role of Vorwitz was restrained, thereby creating a more uniformly dignified tone; but Hofmannsthal expanded it in 1925, when Vorwitz was played by the well-known comic actor Hans Moser, in the more secular setting of Salzburg's newly converted festival theatre.

The function and meaning of Vorwitz, irritating and amusing by turns, quick-witted but slow to realize where his questions may lead, has perplexed many commentators. Only Benjamin Bennett has attempted to integrate Vorwitz into an all-embracing philosophical design. Superimposing on *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* the Neo-Platonic structures of Blake's metaphysics, as related by Kassner, he identifies the pairing of Vorwitz and Death as the Emanation and Spectre of the World, the intellectual imprudence which led to Man's expulsion from Paradise and the shadow of mortality henceforth cast upon him. This has little basis in Hofmannsthal's notes and ceases to be at all convincing when Bennett argues that the notion of enactment makes by definition for a fallen world theatre in which the Master is an Emanation of God.<sup>66</sup> If the figure 'im Sternenmantel' gave this impression, it was certainly not Hofmannsthal's intention, for he soon exchanged the costumed actor for a voice from above, allowing the Angels to play a more vigorous mediatory role and the Almighty to remain, in Platonic terms, an Idea of God.

Clearly, the comic characters facilitate investigation of the theatre metaphor by discouraging passivity in the audience. As Kobel implies, the effect is almost Brechtian: 'Durch die Figur des Vorwitzes wird die Neugier unbeteiligten Zuschauens ironisiert und damit der Theaterbesucher aus dem bloßen

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<sup>64</sup> Kralik, 'Das große Theater der Welt', p. 223.

<sup>65</sup> Eichendorff, *Neue Gesamtausgabe der Werke und Schriften*, III, 330.

<sup>66</sup> Bennett, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal*, pp. 275–79.

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Betrachten herausreflektiert.<sup>67</sup> Hofmannsthal's decision to alter the tone of the *auto sacramental* so radically is also part of his attempt to anchor his adaptation in the Austro-German tradition.

Auto des Calderon auf den oesterreichischen Meridian visiert —  
wessen Beifall damit gesucht wird? Vielleicht der Vorvordern. (W10 111)

What better way to achieve this applause than the traditional comedy of hapless Hans Wurst and witless Devil? Although Vorwitz has antecedents in the *Gracioso* of Golden Age comedy and in the Italian *Commedia dell'arte*, the additions made in 1925 make him a distinctively Austrian Hans Wurst.<sup>68</sup> The adversarial devil is also part of a German tradition insofar as his cold rationality, the antithesis of divine love, is a necessary feature of the medieval *Prozeßgedicht*.

The most striking contrast between Hofmannsthal's and Kralik's versions of the world theatre concerns the recalcitrance of the Beggar. Calderón allows him to reflect on the unpleasantness of his role in soliloquy, phrasing his objections as what he would like to tell his creator but does not dare:

Könnte ich mein Los vermeiden,  
Ach, wie gerne gäb' ich's hin,  
Denk' ich recht in meinem Sinn  
Meiner Rolle bittere Leiden.  
Doch ich kann hier nichts entscheiden,  
Wenn ich mich auch des erfrechte.  
Aber du erwäg' das Rechte,  
Nicht, was nimmer zu dir sagen  
Darf der arme Bettler wagen,  
Nein, was er dir sagen möchte.  
Weshalb ward der Armut Pflicht  
Mir zuteil in der Komödie?  
Diese nur für mich Tragödie  
Und für alle andern nicht?<sup>69</sup>

God being omniscient, these concerns do receive a response, thus nipping rebellion in the bud. While Hofmannsthal's Beggar is mutinous from the

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<sup>67</sup> Kobel, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal*, p. 253.

<sup>68</sup> This is the conclusion of Edda Leisler and Gisela Prossnitz in *Max Reinhardt und die Welt der Commedia dell'arte* (Salzburg: Otto Müller, 1970), p. 34.

<sup>69</sup> Eichendorff, *Neue Gesamtausgabe der Werke und Schriften*, III, 331: italics in original.

outset, Kralik's adaptation removes even the slightest suggestion of dissent; the idea of social unrest is not for a moment considered. This reflects the fact that Kralik, unlike Hofmannsthal, did not regard Bolshevism as a serious threat to Austria. It is, however, unfortunate that Kralik's excisions leave unanswered the Beggar's one pathetic question to the Almighty: 'Gibst du mich so ganz verloren?'<sup>70</sup> Given Kralik's refusal to update the Baroque archetype and lack of interest in social problems, one is tempted to answer in the affirmative.

The first point to consider in approaching the interaction between the six representative figures in *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* is what Hofmannsthal understands by them. For Kralik as for Calderón, King, Rich Man, Beauty, Wisdom, Peasant and Beggar are 'mannigfalt'ge Stände', fulfilling different functions in the hierarchical structure of a traditional society.<sup>71</sup> These social distinctions are not arbitrary but divinely ordained as the best means for each individual to work out his or her salvation and for humanity's historical purpose, the creation of God's kingdom on earth, to be realized. Hofmannsthal explained his revision of this in a rather schoolmasterly letter to the stage-designer Alfred Roller who, it seems, tended to be somewhat literal-minded. Only 'gemäß der Schulgrammatik oder dem Lesebüchlein der formalen Logik' does it exhaust the meaning of the six figures to describe four as 'Stände' and two as human attributes (W10 205); in his poetic schema the five who willingly accept their fate represent 'die fünf Gewalten oder Mächte, an die eben in diesem Mythos das Ganze der Welt aufgeteilt ist' (W10 206). The world theatre is a myth rather than a social model to be applied literally.

But what does it matter if Hofmannsthal calls the theocentric world theatre a myth? Firstly, *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* thereby claims less direct sociological relevance than Calderón's *auto*. In other words, Hofmannsthal implicitly acknowledges the distance between the medieval *Gottesstaat* and the modern world. In theory at least, any solutions the play offers can only be formulated at a poetic level; in practice, it finds itself in that uneasy middle ground between pragmatic social policy and Romantic idealism which, in the early 1920s, was already being claimed by conservative social theorists such as Othmar Spann.<sup>72</sup> Secondly, it is significant that Hofmannsthal prefers to use the term 'myth' rather than 'allegory'. Whereas in the 1890s he seemed

<sup>70</sup> Kralik, 'Das große Theater der Welt', p. 223.

<sup>71</sup> Eichendorff, *Neue Gesamtausgabe der Werke und Schriften*, III, 338.

<sup>72</sup> On parallels with Spann's work, see Walter Weiss, 'Salzburger Mythos? Hofmannsthals und Reinhardts Welttheater', *Zeitgeschichte*, 2 (1975), 109–19, especially pp. 114–15.

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at ease with the label, he now avoids referring to his own work as allegorical, perhaps because he wishes to foster an impression of interpretative openness which has little in common with the schematic inflexibility commonly associated with Baroque allegory. Thirdly, by calling Calderón's world theatre a myth, Hofmannsthal distances himself from its Catholic content. As Kassner points out, 'Mythus ist gefallene Mystik'; what previously commanded absolute belief becomes an imaginative fiction expecting intellectual assent and aesthetic admiration, a means to an end rather than an end in itself.<sup>73</sup> This puts *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* on a par with *Jedermann*, where Hofmannsthal noted 'darüber zu schreiben die Stelle aus dem Briefwechsel Hebbel-Uechtritz: habe mich der christlichen Mythe wie einer anderen bedient' (W9 114). In both cases the religious content of the medieval world-view is hollowed out and replaced with more private concerns; the much-vaunted myth-making proclivity of the poet operates to some extent at the expense of religious substance.

Whereas Calderón has the King enter last, he is the first to take up his position in Hofmannsthal's world theatre and occupies centre-stage. Like the Emperor in 'Der Kaiser von China spricht', he is master of all he surveys; his realm is a picture of stability and just, if self-satisfied government. But there are also signs that he has forgotten that his life is merely a play. 'Herrschen ist Leben — alles sonst ein Wahn', he exclaims. Like the Emperor of the poem, he has set himself up as a god in his own miniature world, safeguarding his position by keeping 'Das Hohe hoch, das Niedre niedrig' (W10 23). In Calderón's text, a reminder of the play's motto, 'Tue Recht — Gott über euch', follows each of these introductory speeches, thus inviting the audience to judge the figures' attitudes to God and to their fellow men in accordance with Christian moral standards. This is also encouraged by a number of leading questions, Calderón's King, for example, closing with 'Was bedarf ich noch hienieden?'<sup>74</sup> Hofmannsthal does less to promote reflection of this kind, insofar as metaphysical forces intervene less frequently in his *Welttheater*; and the commentary provided by the duo of Vorwitz and Wisdom offers little unambiguous moral guidance.

Once the King has claimed centre-stage, Beauty and Wisdom enter together. With this pairing, Hofmannsthal creates an effect analogous to that of Faith and

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<sup>73</sup> Kassner, *Sämtliche Werke*, I, 40.

<sup>74</sup> Eichendorff, *Neue Gesamtausgabe der Werke und Schriften*, III, 344.

Good Works in *Jedermann*: two female allegories, one worldly and sensuous, the other more forbidding and austere. Here as in that play the females function in relation to a male figure. Beauty, like Good Works, is easily won, but the King has to overcome his more worldly self in order to approach Wisdom and never entirely succeeds. As the epitome of narcissistic self-absorption, Beauty uses images of power and centrality analogous to those of the King; just as he imagined rivers and mountains looking upon his inherited glory, so Beauty sees an admiring audience all around her:

Wie alles zu mir blitzt und äugt und lacht!  
Reizende Ferne, zauberhafte Nähe,  
In der ich als ein Zauberwesen stehe. (W10 24)

Revelling in her transforming power, Beauty immediately draws the King into her sphere. Enthralled, he exclaims:

Helenas Werke sind nicht einst gewesen,  
Sie werfen ab Jahrtausendlast,  
Sind wieder, sind von heut, sind ewig da! (W10 25)

His compliment is her error too: although earthly beauty is a reflection of the divine and therefore timeless in the spiritual, Neo-Platonic sense, it does not allow individuals to rise above their mortality. Whereas for Calderón Beauty was largely a representation of Woman, leading men astray when she should be leading them to God, Hofmannsthal interprets the figure more broadly as representing the dangers of aestheticism. Thus, insofar as private theatres continue to be established in small areas of the world's stage, *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* is no different from his lyrical dramas. The relationship between King and Beauty indeed has echoes of *Der Kaiser und die Hexe* insofar as the woman is a 'Zauberwesen' with a potentially detrimental power over a man who should himself be exerting his authority for the public good.

Alexander Parker concludes in his classic analysis of *El gran teatro del mundo* that the King is the least satisfactory figure in Calderón's world theatre. He argues that, since the play was to be performed in front of the Spanish king, his government and a cross-section of the population, Calderón was understandably nervous of criticizing that figure, even though the King fails to fulfil his

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social duty when he abdicates responsibility for the Beggar's welfare.<sup>75</sup> I would contend that Hofmannsthal falls victim to a similar anxiety with respect to his characterization of Wisdom. The solemn figure in a nun's habit who shuns the confusions and shallow pleasures of this world in order to contemplate the next in prayerful solitude was for Calderón an allegory of the Roman Catholic Church. Hofmannsthal makes no mention of this, instead explaining in his third 'Wiener Brief' (1923) that he has tried 'die Andeutung alles dessen zu vereinigen, was wir an Hohem, Unselbstischem, Gott-Gleichem in uns tragen, sei es nun aus religiöser oder aus profaner Tradition' (RA2 288). Wisdom represents a level of intuition and a standard of right behaviour to which the others should aspire; whereas in Calderón this is expressed in terms of traditional piety, Hofmannsthal defines it as a vague sense of striving towards higher things. This casting around for words and images that are not part of the institutionalized vocabulary is typical of Hofmannsthal's attempts to define the philosophical and religious content of his play. Of the Beggar's transformation he writes: 'Er ist mit einem Schlag ein Weiser geworden, oder ein Christ, oder ein Erleuchteter, oder wie man es nennen will' (RA2 289). Whether one views this as a sign of unease or as a deliberate openness, it still causes certain difficulties in the role of Wisdom, the figure by which his re-interpretation of Calderón's world theatre either stands or falls.

Holding herself apart from the 'Wirbel' of the world, Wisdom becomes what one might call a spiritual *raisonneur*, a counter-voice to the worldly, often trivializing commentary of Vorwitz. Perhaps because Hofmannsthal finds it difficult to express her otherworldliness in positive terms, it reveals itself, prior to the arrival of the Beggar, as a tone of disapproval; she effectively takes on the role of Calderón's 'Gesetz der Gnade', but her warnings carry far less authority. Usually juxtaposed with another speech and in close proximity to the commentary of Vorwitz, they invite a more dialectical response than the unmistakably Christian moral judgement which punctuates Calderón's text. The Beggar, sensing that the verbalization of experience is part of the social drama from which he is excluded, is most critical of Wisdom's sanctimonious remarks, brushing them aside as 'Lirumlarum' (W10 30) and 'Weiberred' (W10 31).

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<sup>75</sup> Alexander A. Parker, *The Allegorical Drama of Calderon: An Introduction to the Autos Sacramentales* (Oxford and London: Dolphin Book Company, 1943), pp. 110–55 (pp. 138–39, 149–50).

Although Wisdom loses much of her specifically Christian identity, she still implores God for strength and forgiveness in the moment of crisis and despatches the Beggar to the forest with the exhortation: 'Grab dich in Waldesgrund und blühe als ein Christ!' (W10 49). Hofmannsthal's secularization of his Baroque archetype is most disappointing in poetic terms shortly before the Beggar's transformation. Expecting the axe to strike at the very foundations of society, Wisdom acknowledges that all bear some responsibility for the catastrophe, and yet prays that God will be merciful:

Du machst mit einem fürchterlichen Winke  
Dem anbefohlenen Spiel ein jähes End,  
Sieh willig uns vor deiner Bühne weichen,  
Und — eh in Schatten unser Spiel versinke —  
Sieh noch zuletzt die aufgereckten Händ! (W10 46)

Why does the *theatrum mundi* topos, which has not so far been directly mentioned in the inner action, now suddenly reappear? Does this figure know every detail of her pre-existential life? If so, how? Surely, it would have been more subtle and more in keeping with the philosophical basis of the *Welt-theater*, had Wisdom expressed her faith in the divine spectator in a more imaginative mystical idiom, such as is used elsewhere in the play. Within the inner action theatrical metaphors are most effective when they appear as fragmentary personal insights as, for example, when a faded Beauty looks into Wisdom's face and sees that she too is 'gealtert, doch nur wie ein Edelstein, / Der alternd aushaucht eingesognen Schein' (W10 53). Wisdom's direct articulation of the *theatrum mundi* as a given, preceding the Beggar's gradual discovery of this perspective, is unfortunate, since it dulls the effect of his insights and unwittingly reveals Hofmannsthal's discomfort with the Catholicity of Calderón's work.

Hofmannsthal's Rich Man is a far happier modernization, insofar as he is able, without making fundamental changes, to appropriate that figure for his personal crusade against the evils of capitalism. Like the King and Beauty, the Rich Man has lost sight of God; and, like Jedermann, he has set up Mammon as the new idol. Consequently, the speech with which he introduces himself has echoes both of the imperialist Faust and of the ruthlessness with which Mephistopheles does his bidding. His canals and mines, scarring the earth for the sake of financial gain, travesty the Angel's exhortation to 'create over creation' and contribute to a convincing allegorical presentation of modern

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industrial society, a world in which traditional authority, as represented by the King, has been undermined by the power of money. The Rich Man comes onto the stage together with the Farmer, whose laconic pose is characteristic of a confident self-reliance, a knowledge, subsequently made explicit, that he is master in his modest domain, is a necessary part of the social hierarchy, and must therefore make no apology for his presence.

Last to enter is the Beggar, the figure who, as Hofmannsthal never tired of saying, contains his most challenging innovation. As was clear in the letter to Roller examined above, Hofmannsthal's mythical survey of the forces constituting human society is complete without the Beggar. At some point since the Baroque era he, and with him the notion of charity as a Christian duty, has been pushed out of the picture, leaving the five 'gemütliche Leut', as Vorwitz calls them, as a parody of Austria's traditional complacency (W10 29). The Spanish term 'pobre' can be translated both as Poor Man and Beggar but the latter has tended to be preferred because his original dramatic function was to test out the other five by approaching them and begging for alms. In this sense, Hofmannsthal's Beggar is a misnomer since he no longer begs; overwhelmed, not unlike the Ploughman, by the loss of his wife and children, he is a victim of calamity and social injustice, a representative of the disinherited class which demanded its rights in the revolutions of 1919. Hofmannsthal notes approvingly that Moissi, wearing a red cockade, gave the figure 'etwas Russisches, und das Gespenst des Bolschewismus stand sehr deutlich hinter seinen außerordentlichen, sparsamen und unvergeßlichen Gebärden' (RA2 293). How do the other figures measure up to this challenge? Beauty, repelled by the Beggar's ugliness, has little sympathy; Wisdom offers money and well-meaning advice but is rebuffed and points him towards the King, presumably hoping that the latter will provide some form of redress. He, however, loses patience as soon as the Beggar becomes aggressive, refusing to justify or share his own good fortune, and sends the Rich Man to pacify him. The latter adopts an approach similar to that of Frau Welt, taunting the Beggar that he is too deeply conditioned to revolt or to conceive of an alternative world order. His sophistic argument produces an ominous silence for the simple reason that it contains an element of truth. For Hofmannsthal the Beggar represents 'die Drohung des Chaos an die geordnete Welt' (RA2 287) rather than an alternative world order.

The crisis begins to mount as the Beggar sees what others have and he does not: family, comfort, wealth and a chance of happiness. He realizes that there

is no easy answer to the King's question, 'Wen zeihst du wessen?' (W10 33), for the whole system is flawed. The climax of the play is, however, delayed by the Beggar's encounter with the Farmer, in whom he sees what he once was and would still like to be. When the Farmer offers him poorly paid employment as a wood-cutter, he is willing to accept, that is until the Farmer adds that the Beggar must also restore order in the forest by preventing poor widows and their children from stealing firewood. With the realization that he can only survive by increasing the suffering of others and colluding with an ownership mentality that leaves nothing for free, the Beggar finally raises the axe. The deadly earnest with which this confrontation is depicted leaves open the suggestion that the Beggar may indeed be 'des höchsten Willens arger Bot' (W10 47), that age-old structures might deserve to tumble and might even do so with Hofmannsthal's blessing.

The resolution of the crisis is, in Hofmannsthal's words, 'nicht optimistisch, aber auch nicht pessimistisch, sondern dichterisch oder religiös' (RA2 288). Before considering whether this had any value at the time, it is interesting to look more closely at how Hofmannsthal brings about the Beggar's renunciation of violent action and how this fits with the framework of *Das Salzburger große Welttheater*. When the Beggar raises the axe, it looks as if a new myth is about to be born; but as Wisdom begs forgiveness for all, the Beggar undergoes a Pauline conversion. Sinking into a trance-like state, he dreams of felling a tree, seeing a light above it and hearing a human voice (originally that of his dead wife) in its branches. Coming to himself he is almost overwhelmed by this mystical experience, a miracle has been wrought within him. Immediately putting aside his anger and desire for revenge, he explains his experience in terms of the Neo-Platonic doctrine of anamnesis of the soul.

Ich hab ein Wort gehört, das war mir lang verloren,  
Mir ist, da ichs gehört, da war ich ungeboren,  
Und eines Engels Mund gab mir so zarte Lehre —  
Von Freiheit war das Wort und welcher Art die wäre. (W10 50)

In keeping with this, the Beggar perceives his future life of solitude in the forest as a return to things past and, most strikingly, to the innocence of childhood.

Als wie von Ewigkeit  
Ist mir der Wald bereit,  
Da ich ein schuldlos Kind

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Auf moosigem Stein gelegen.  
Dort liegen und in Lust  
Mich ganz zu Gott zu regen! (W10 49)

The Beggar's insight into his higher self allows him to see life as a play. In accepting his pre-ordained role he finds both a poetic voice and a wry sense of humour. As Shakespeare's Macbeth and Grillparzer's König Ottokar realize too late, every figure in the world's theatre is given a costume appropriate to his station and, more practically, to his stature. The dwarf or the clown in borrowed robes remains a dwarf and a clown, his performance 'ein ärmlich puppig Spiel'. In political terms, nothing can be gained from simply rearranging the roles; what is needed is 'für wahr und ganz ein neuer Weltstand' (W10 50), and that can only be achieved through some form of spiritual transformation.

As far as the philosophical coherence of Hofmannsthal's world theatre is concerned, it is important to see that the Beggar not only redefines his ideal of freedom but also gives new meaning to fraternity and equality. Whereas he had formerly said that he wanted a role allowing him freedom of action, he now asserts his freedom aright in a renunciation of action; he discovers that he was trapped by the world's way of thinking, by the urge to snatch at what cannot in reality be reduced to a bill of rights but is rather a spiritual concept, an attitude of mind. The issue of fraternity is also reiterated as the insurgent Beggar tells the King: 'Jakob, du sitzt in gestohlenem Erbe, / Und Esau kommt, das Seine sich zu holen!' (W10 34). However, Wisdom cites another case of fraternal enmity to remind him of the risks: 'Da du ein Kind warst, grauset dich Kain, / Willst du in sein Geschick?' (W10 46). At the end of the Beggar's life a very different image of brotherhood and equality emerges. The Rich Man, paralysed by fear, cowers on the ground and the Beggar bends over him to say, 'Komm, mein Bruder, komm doch, es geht sterben!' (W10 62) and has to repeat himself before the Rich Man grasps the full meaning of the words. Given this moving gesture and the final return of the souls, distinguishable only in their faces, it becomes superfluous for him to announce, like Calderón's Beggar, that 'In des Grabes Garderobe / Sind wir all' einander gleich'.<sup>76</sup>

Hofmannsthal concludes the play-within-a-play with a dance of death, a pantomimic scene in which the actors step round and about each other like the

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<sup>76</sup> Eichendorff, *Neue Gesamtausgabe der Werke und Schriften*, III, 363.

figurines of an astrological clock, moving to the beat of Death's drum. As well as being more suited to an international festival audience than the recitation of poetic set-pieces with which Calderón's play concludes, visual images of transience have a peculiarly modern resonance in the immediate postwar period. They frequently appear in expressionist drama as, for example, in Leo Weismantel's *Der Totentanz* 1921, a play which was also premiered in a decommissioned church, the Katharinenkirche in Nuremberg. As with the banquet scene in *Jedermann*, the less static, non-verbal presentation offered Reinhardt a chance to make a distinctive contribution to the work. Indeed, Walk argues that the scene is so striking theatrically and so easily understood in comparison with the Beggar's transformation that *media in vita in morte sumus* is the message which the average spectator is most likely to take away.<sup>77</sup> However, even if, as Walk suggests, this constitutes a triumph of Reinhardt's theatrical instinct over Hofmannsthal's philosophical intent, Hofmannsthal puts his admiration on record in 'Reinhardt bei der Arbeit' (RA2 306–08).

The exits of the players, called off the stage by Death, and the judgement of their performances is low-key by comparison but extremely important philosophically. Frau Welt's ode to time opens this final movement by questioning the stability of Master-Servant relationships. Familiar from *Jedermann*'s dispute with Mammon, the theme is elaborated further as each actor is forced to realize that 'Macht ist Ohnmacht' (W10 54). Unlike in Calderón there is little sense of *mea culpa*; instead Hofmannsthal uses these final moments to complete his characterization of Rich Man, Farmer and Beggar. Rather than preparing for his own demise, the Rich Man sees the King's exit as a chance to step into his shoes and imperiously commands Beauty to his side; the Farmer too remains true to character as he tries to evade Death by pleading that he is too busy; the Beggar, like Wisdom, welcomes the end.

In conventional Catholic terms the outcome is well known. The performances of Beggar and Wisdom are most pleasing to God; they are immediately admitted to the Eucharist. Beauty, the King and the Farmer rely on divine grace for later admission and the Rich Man is left waiting in darkness for the day when a camel passes through the eye of a needle. Although it is *in nuce*

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<sup>77</sup> Cynthia Walk, *Hofmannsthals 'Großes Welttheater': Drama und Theater*, Frankfurter Beiträge zur Germanistik, 20 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1980), pp. 106–11.

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the resolution demanded by the Baroque world theatre, two speeches also bring it in line with the Neo-Platonic view of death. Firstly, the Beggar responds to the news that he is to depart this life by kissing the ground:

Ich küß den lieben Erdengrund,  
Der mich aufnehmen wird zu kleiner Ruh.  
Süß wird sie sein, des Saatkorns Ruh,  
Dann steh ich auf —  
*er steht auf* in einem Nu. (W10 62)

Thus he anticipates a resurrection which might also be seen as reincarnation. The second important speech is made by Frau Welt who, once she has denuded the players of props and costumes, revels in their impending physical decay: 'Wollet ihr noch immer mit einem Ichts prunken, ihr Toten! so fahre meiner Verwesung grüner Sturm an euch und wirble euch elende Schatten dahin, daß ihr in tausend Nichts zerstäubet! Eilig!' (W10 65). An Angel immediately quells the storm and dismisses Frau Welt. Like Death in *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen*, she has overstepped the limits of her role:

Tritt weg, Welt, denn deinen Auftrag hast du erfüllt, und dein Meister ist mit dir zufrieden. Diese aber sind dir nicht mehr untergeben: es sind Seelen, unzerstörbare, und was dein Auge an ihnen für eine Miene nimmt, das ist das Siegel ihrer geistigen Wesenheit, damit Er sie gesiegelt hat. Daran rühren deine Stürme nicht. — Du bist entlassen. (W10 65)

Man's soul is indestructible and returns to God, who declares himself satisfied with Frau Welt and with the stage she has provided.

This affirmation that all is well with the world is significant, for there is a sense throughout the play that it is not just individuals who must prove themselves, but the whole created world, the wonders of which are not here extolled as a matter of course, as they are in Calderón's *Welttheater*. It is typical of Hofmannsthal's outlook in the early 1920s that the final speeches of his play do indeed strike an optimistic note, confirming not only that all is well with the world but also, by extension, that God is still in his heaven. This feeling was, however, far from being universal. In particular, Karl Kraus felt that the barbarism of recent events, what he termed the 'Brand des Welttheaters', had rendered its traditional theocentric forms obsolete and

offensive.<sup>78</sup> Whereas Hofmannsthal believed that certain things had improved as a result of the War (the renewed sense of community, the overcoming of materialism), for Kraus it had revealed the spiritual and moral bankruptcy of the combatant countries and of the Catholic Church, the collapse of the latter – being confirmed by its sell-out to the commercialism and insincere Catholicism of the Salzburg Festival. Kraus was all the more hostile to Hofmannsthal because he too had a profound attachment to the notion of *Welttheater*. However, instead of making ‘auf das Leid der Kreatur einen gottgefälligen Vers’, as he accused Hofmannsthal of doing, Kraus himself documented the apocalyptic destruction of the *theatrum mundi* in his cosmic drama *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*, also published in 1922.<sup>79</sup> Since Kraus was opposed as a matter of principle to almost every aspect of Hofmannsthal’s cultural ideology, there is little point in defending him in detail against such a deep-seated antipathy; one might, however, provide food for thought by citing a remark from Hofmannsthal’s introduction to his *Neue Deutsche Beiträge* (1922), in which he castigates ‘die Gebärde einer geistreichen Verzweiflung’ (RA2 198) favoured by some individuals as unproductive and self-indulgent.

Had *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* been written ten or fifteen years earlier, one might have concluded with Coghlan that ‘in an age marked by secularism, materialism, and a turning away from “outworn” religious conventions, Hofmannsthal succeeded in making these things at least a matter for theatrical enjoyment and serious discussion’.<sup>80</sup> However, as Kraus made only too clear, the world had moved on since the premiere of *Jedermann*, and was on the brink of an age that would be marked by authoritarian government, reactionary Catholicism, and a politicization of art mirroring the aestheticization of politics. In that climate, discussion of Hofmannsthal’s work and of the issues it raised did not always develop as he might have liked; in order to see how it outgrew his control, one must return to the play itself and the range of interpretations which it permits.

*Das Salzburger große Welttheater* has the remarkable characteristic that what one sees depends on what one is looking to see. Almost throughout the

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<sup>78</sup> Karl Kraus, ‘Vom großen Welttheaterschwindel’, *Die Fackel*, 601–07 (November 1922), 1–7 (p. 5); repr. in *Hofmannsthal im Urteil seiner Kritiker*, ed. by Gotthart Wunberg, *Wirkung der Literatur*, 4 (Frankfurt a.M.: Athenäum, 1972), pp. 303–06 (p. 306). See also Edward Timms, ‘Hofmannsthal, Kraus and the “Theatrum Mundi”’ in *Hugo von Hofmannsthal: Commemorative Essays*, ed. by W.E. Yuill and Patricia Howe (London: [n. pub.], 1981), pp. 123–32.

<sup>79</sup> Kraus, ‘Vom großen Welttheaterschwindel’, p. 4 (p. 305).

<sup>80</sup> Coghlan, *Hofmannsthal’s Festival Dramas*, p. 182.

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play Hofmannsthal's treatment of the world theatre metaphor admits Neo-Platonic, Catholic and 'loosely religious' interpretations. As already demonstrated, the Baroque world theatre features in the lyrical dramas *Der Tor und der Tod* and *Der Kaiser und die Hexe* as a moral perspective set against the claims of the self-centred aesthete; but when Hofmannsthal came to create *Das kleine Welttheater* it was a form of Neo-Platonism, closely connected with his insights into childhood, which gave a spiritual dimension to his poetic universe and to the lives of the figures within it. By the time he had progressed to the greater world theatre, the influence of Blake (via Kassner) was well-established and *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen* (via Burdach) had also made considerable impact. As Bergstraesser has shown, it is very possible to produce a coherent interpretation of *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* relying almost exclusively on the Neo-Platonic insights gathered together in 'Ad me ipsum'. The problem with such an interpretation is that at times it will contradict the response of any spectator with an experience of Christianity. For example, the idea that the Beggar is transformed not by divine grace but by entering the allomantic sphere of Wisdom seems to be a wilful refusal to see the obvious.

The attempt to interpret *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* purely in terms of Hofmannsthal's private mysticism is all the more problematic because the forms of Neo-Platonism which were for him a natural poetic idiom blend easily with an undogmatic Christianity. Just as Burdach sees 'freireligiöse Züge' associated with the Bohemian Pre-Reformation in the Ackermann's final prayer, so the metaphysics of *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* has much in common with the liberal and modernist theology of the early twentieth century.<sup>81</sup> Since this movement was predominantly Protestant and involved a reduction of dogma, one can see this as an attempt to make *Das Salzburger große Welttheater*, like *Jedermann*, acceptable to as many people as possible. Hermann Bahr's reflections on the modernist debate, in which he took considerable interest whilst defining his own religious beliefs, make clear that the new theology rejects the dualism of Man and God and interprets the Fall simply as the moment of separation from the Godhead rather than as a portent of gloom. Man's task is to discover and fulfil the God-given potential with which he comes into the world. Bahr's essays 'Religion' and 'Campbell' (on R.J. Campbell, author of *The New Theology*) indeed contain much that

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<sup>81</sup> Burdach, 'Platonische, freireligiöse und persönliche Züge im "Ackermann aus Böhmen"', in *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen des Johannes von Tepl und seine Zeit*, pp. 186–96.

anticipates *Das Salzburger große Welttheater*. He writes of Campbell: 'Sein Gott ist nun eine Art Künstler, der das Bedürfnis hat, Gestalten zu formen, an denen er sein eigenes Wesen selbst erblicken kann. [...] Der ganze kosmische Prozeß ist eine lange Inkarnation, ein Auferstehen des Göttlichen, das wieder in sich selbst zurückkehrt.'<sup>82</sup>

Bahr also offers an interesting perspective on the question of religious myth, which is so central to an assessment of *Das Salzburger große Welttheater*. He points out that, if one has a Machian awareness of the subjectivity of all human perception, one must distinguish between the eternal truths of religion and the forms in which each generation expresses them. This is, of course, the sort of argumentation which was anathema to Kralik, but it does set Hofmannsthal's modernization of Calderón's world theatre in a broader religious context. It can be seen as a simple, almost primitive Man-centred faith, calculated to have more appeal for a modern audience than the dogmatic Catholicism of the Baroque world-view. This line was taken by Andrian when he reviewed *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* in the liberal Catholic journal *Hochland* and recommended it as 'die im Dogmatischen aufs Einfachste kondensierte, aber mit allen den verfeinerten Menschen dieser Zeit lockenden Reizen umspinnene Predigt von den ersten und letzten Dingen'.<sup>83</sup> It seems almost ironic that the Baroque theatricality which had attracted Reinhardt in the first instance is seen more as window-dressing than as an essential part of the enterprise.

This leaves the question how much traditional Catholicism remains. Certainly, God's law is less prominent in Hofmannsthal's text than in Calderón's, thus placing the onus on Man to find his way back to God and to know intuitively how to do that. Hofmannsthal also attaches little importance to last-minute repentance. Whereas it is an advantage for Calderón's Peasant that he expresses genuine regret at not having made his physical labours a spiritual task ('Gut beschloß der Ackersmann'),<sup>84</sup> Hofmannsthal's Farmer wins only the approval of Vorwitz ('Ganz gut hat er sein Abgang gemacht, der Bauer' (W10 61)) who fails to see in him the thief who is not sorry he stole but very sorry that he was caught. This contrasts sharply with Kralik's *Das große Theater der Welt* where the atmosphere is dominated by an insistence on

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<sup>82</sup> Hermann Bahr, 'Campbell', in Bahr, *Inventur* (Berlin: Fischer, 1912), pp. 75–87 (p. 75); the essay 'Religion' is in the same volume, pp. 61–74.

<sup>83</sup> Leopold von Andrian, 'Das "Große Salzburger Welttheater"', *Hochland*, 20, ii (1922), 177–80; repr. in *Hofmannsthal im Urteil seiner Kritiker*, pp. 300–03 (p. 303).

<sup>84</sup> Eichendorff, *Neue Gesamtausgabe der Werke und Schriften*, III, 354.

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piety and obedience. Kralik retains not only the warning voice of the 'Gesetz' but also the association of Church and State. Rather than being conscious of his own divinity, his Beggar knows that he is a fallen creature, born in sin; the superiority of this figure lies in accepting and making light of the suffering that will pave his way to God: 'Hätt' ich in größern Nöten noch geschmachtet!'<sup>85</sup> Although Kralik's version ends in celebration for all but the Rich Man, his World closes the play, 'Ja, ein Schauspiel ist das Leben. / Gott ist dieses Schauspiels Lenker', thus exhorting the spectator to traditional faith and political acquiescence.<sup>86</sup> This contrasts with Hofmannsthal who clearly wanted to end on a conciliatory note and closes by assuring his largely affluent audience that the 'goldne Gnadenkette' (W10 65) may, one day, be extended even to the Rich Man.

Even though the underlying philosophy of *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* is Neo-Platonic, and the overall tenor of the play is religious without being dogmatically so, on the surface it is strongly Catholic. Whether one regards it as myth or allegory, the image of the social order remains essentially as in Calderón's *auto*, and Hofmannsthal confirms this by retaining the principle of divine judgement. The Baroque topos of the *theatrum mundi* is set before the audience in an entertaining and at times irreverent manner, but loses few of its traditional emphases in the process. In fact, the animation of the outer framework serves paradoxically to heighten the seriousness of the inner action, once lively prose has given way to measured verse. These factors, together with the choice of setting and Hofmannsthal's decision to use church music modelled on the Baroque oratorio, are sufficient to give the play a potential for alignment with the politics of conservative Catholicism.

How one interprets the role of the Beggar is obviously a key issue in judging the political thrust of *Das Salzburger große Welttheater*. As Hofmannsthal himself realized, the Beggar's change of heart has much in common with an expressionist *Wandlung* (RA2 287), and the verdict of the maecenas in Sorge's *Der Bettler* is as applicable here as it was in that work: 'Was Sie als Zukunft sehen, ist Dichtung und ein nie erfüllbarer Traum.'<sup>87</sup> But is this really how Hofmannsthal sees the future? On the one hand, he intended Moissi to evoke 'das Gespenst des Bolschewismus' (RA2 293), a

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<sup>85</sup> Kralik, 'Das große Theater der Welt', p. 228.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>87</sup> Reinhard Johannes Sorge, *Werke*, ed. by Hans Gerd Rötzer, 3 vols (Nuremberg: Glock & Lutz, 1962–67), II, 34.

recognisable contemporary phenomenon; on the other hand, the Beggar's departure for the forest offers no viable solution to the problem of mass poverty; rather than being reintegrated into society, the alienated proletariat is marginalized even further. Viewed thus, the play's message seems crude and uncaring. Kraus called the play 'das große Welttheater der zum Himmel stinkenden Kontraste'; and another contemporary reviewer wrote of 'eine ziemlich durchsichtige Karikierung des Kommunismus, des ganzen unruhigen Geistes der Zeit und eine leichte Ironie, wie sie darin liegt, wenn man im Oriente einem Bettler ein Almosen verweigernd sagt: Gott wird dich im Himmel belohnen.'<sup>88</sup> My response to such criticism would be to argue that Hofmannsthal was patently not trying in *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* to offer a practical solution to the problem of poverty, or even to remind his audience of a still menacing peril. Rather, in the miraculous transformation of the Beggar he can be said to allegorize the overcoming of the revolutionary threat, which by 1922 had largely receded. *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* presents it as something for the young Austrian Republic to celebrate, not in a mood of self-congratulation but in humility — for the powerlessness of Wisdom and Hofmannsthal's unflattering characterization of the other figures underline the suggestion that it was possibly only by the grace of God that the crisis was indeed averted.

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<sup>88</sup> Kraus, 'Vom großen Welttheaterschwindel', p. 4 (p. 305); Z.R.R., 'Das Salzburger große Welttheater', *Reichspost*, 19 August 1922, pp. 4–5 (p. 5).

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This study has shown that, if one looks at the particular case of Austria, the idea of reviving traditional forms of religious drama was far from being merely a phenomenon of the 1920s, a short-term reaction to the devastation and upheavals caused by the First World War. Rather, the conservative modernism of that period took its place alongside a Catholic cultural revival which had been ongoing since the early 1890s and which had its roots in the Romanticism of Richard Wagner and in the generational revolt provoked by the liberal crises of the 1870s. The two writers on whom this study has focused, Richard von Kralik and Hugo von Hofmannsthal, are in many senses representative of the first two waves of post-liberal reaction ('Die Jungen' and 'Jung Wien'). With the notable exception of the early work *Offenbarung*, Kralik consistently rejected the culture of individualism and sought to re-establish a sense of religious and patriotic community; in contrast to this, Hofmannsthal's lyricism of the 1890s was symptomatic of a retreat from collectivism into the private world of the artist, one from which he only began to emerge in the early years of the twentieth century. Sharing a fascination with the theatre as metaphor and institution, Kralik and Hofmannsthal had in common that the notion of *Welttheater* repeatedly provided them with a means of understanding the self and of formulating their creative responses to the liberal legacy. Perhaps even more remarkably, Calderón's *El gran teatro del mundo* remained a key point of reference for both writers, thus facilitating exploration of the distinctive but often competing strands of Catholic cultural revival with which they were associated.

In considering Hofmannsthal's work alongside Kralik's, no attempt has been made to suggest that they are writers of comparable literary standing. The intention has been rather to offer a new perspective on a small number of Hofmannsthal's works by presenting them against an unfamiliar cultural backdrop and, in so doing, to open up an area of Austrian studies which has received far less critical attention than it deserves. In order to achieve this it has been necessary to combine a realistic assessment of Kralik's merits as a

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writer with an evaluation of his very substantial contribution to Austria's cultural history. Since the final section of Chapter Six was devoted to a detailed analysis of his career, it is not intended in this chapter to repeat that material, rather to focus briefly on some of the insights which have been achieved by means of this somewhat unconventional juxtaposition of a major figure in the Austrian literary canon and one who has all too frequently been banished to the margins of cultural history. The final section of this chapter will then look forward to the 1930s, exploring some of the ways in which Austrian writers and cultural politicians continued to develop and exploit the traditions of Catholic drama which Hofmannsthal and Kralik had helped to establish.

In the introduction to his seminal work on Viennese *fin-de-siècle* culture, Schorske made the remark that 'the new culture-makers in the city of Freud [...] *repeatedly* defined themselves in terms of a kind of collective oedipal revolt'.<sup>1</sup> By setting Hofmannsthal and Kralik side by side it has been possible to interrogate the nature of that repetition, to identify the kind of patterns which emerged, and to demonstrate that the effects of not one but successive generational revolts continued to reverberate through Austrian cultural life from the early 1890s until the latter years of the First Republic. Both amongst Hofmannsthal's and Kralik's generations a sense of alienation from the liberal tradition encouraged an openness to forces beyond the rational. Whereas this led members of the Pernerstorfer circle to embrace diverse forms of political irrationalism, the writers of 'Jung Wien' retreated into the private sphere, discovering the non-rational aspects of the human psyche just at the time when the new mass parties were endeavouring to harness them in public life. While Kralik, in writing drama, consistently refused to explore what might be going on in his characters' minds, Hofmannsthal developed a profound, quasi-scientific interest in the formation of personality and in the workings of the modern psyche, only gradually coming to perceive a socio-political role for the writer and to view social communities as anything more than collections of individuals.

It has hopefully become clear in the course of this study that the established image of Viennese turn-of-the-century culture is in need of revision, that the intersecting circles of avant-garde activity, taking in everything from music, painting, literature and architecture to psychoanalysis, philosophy and

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<sup>1</sup> Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, p. xxvi; my italics.

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economics, tell only part of the story.<sup>2</sup> In order to complete it, one must also take into account the more inward-looking Catholic milieu, the fact that the birth of literary modernism was accompanied by the rise of a Catholic anti-modernism. The cultural initiatives of the Leo-Gesellschaft in the 1890s may have been tentative and shortlived but they nevertheless brought together those Catholic intellectuals who were most eager to add a Catholic dimension to Viennese cultural life and, insofar as they were widely reported, the Leo-Gesellschaft productions began the process of bringing the existence of a Catholic cultural scene to public attention. Even more importantly in the longer term, by staging works such as Calderón's *Das große Welttheater*, the Catholic community established a prior claim on the Baroque heritage, firmly connecting the revival of that cultural tradition with the political Catholicism of the Christian Social party.

Although neither camp consciously thought along these lines, one might suggest in retrospect that the dispute over who was the legitimate carrier of the Baroque tradition and how that tradition should be taken forward began as early as the 1890s. Writers such as Hofmannsthal and Schnitzler savoured the supreme theatricality of Man's confrontation with his mortality but infused the Baroque archetype with an insistent modernity that often had little interest in traditional moral issues. While Schnitzler explored the psychological effects of living under the shadow of Death in plays such as *Liebelei* and *Der einsame Weg*, Hofmannsthal's *Der Tor und der Tod* challenged the limits of the *theatrum mundi* by giving primacy to the solipsistic world theatre of the aesthete. The gesture of reaction against traditional forms of the topos was, however, most explicit in *Das kleine Welttheater*, as the young Hofmannsthal resolutely transformed the allegorical representation of the macrocosm into a means to explore the complexities of the microcosm — the individual psyche. Taking the Romantic affinity between poet and child, and the role-playing Machian personality, Hofmannsthal fused them to produce a world theatre which, despite its intensely private nature, nevertheless offered subtle insights into the mind of the age, into the dilemmas of the modern artist and the forces (outside and within) that threatened his creativity. Although Hofmannsthal worked in *Das kleine Welttheater* with a form of figural allegory very different from that of his Baroque model, and although one must be wary of giving Hofmannsthal's literary oeuvre a spurious monumentality (as he himself did in

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<sup>2</sup> See Timms, *Karl Kraus*, pp. 7–9.

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'Ad me ipsum'), the co-existence of Neo-Platonic and Dionysian perspectives in the lyrical drama nevertheless offers a simultaneous vision of spiritual estrangement and wholeness which, when transferred back from the private to the public realm, leads to more traditional Christian forms of the *theatrum mundi* and to notions of *völkisch* community which are comparable to those promoted by Kralik.

Both in the case of Hofmannsthal and of Kralik their fascination with the *theatrum mundi* was part of a broader preoccupation with myths, with creating, deconstructing and combining them in a manner that had profound cultural and political implications. While Kralik's *Offenbarung* made struggling mortals into Olympian gods playing at life, Hofmannsthal unpacked the myth of Psyche for the modern reader in *Das kleine Welttheater* and used psychoanalysis in his Greek adaptations to reveal dark irrational forces operating behind the familiar narratives. That neither writer shunned the syncretistic approach is one of the signs of a late culture. While Kralik's festival plays repeatedly combined Germanic and Christian elements in order to give Austrian Catholics a legendary past to be proud of, the uncommitted eclecticism of Hofmannsthal's lyrical dramas was carried into his festival plays as an assumption that one mythical code is invariably interwoven with many others. In both cases the stance had serious repercussions. However unproblematic Kralik himself found his approach, the results were occasionally risible (as, for example when a group representing 'die heilige Gralsgemeinde' took part in a Corpus Christi procession),<sup>3</sup> and there were insoluble contradictions between his Austrian patriotism, his essentially *großdeutsch* Catholicism and his belief in German cultural hegemony, the same contradictions which were later to undermine the ideology of the Corporate State. If Kralik perhaps took myth too seriously, Hofmannsthal failed to realize that others did retain a substantial attachment to the Christian tradition, instead assuming, especially in *Jedermann*, that audiences would appreciate the secular nature of his underlying message.

Thanks to his familiarity with Wagner's cultural ideology, Kralik was aware from the outset of his literary career that, in the absence of more substantial legitimation, myths could be used to foster national, religious and cultural identity. Hofmannsthal moved towards this standpoint during the First World War. Having found reassurance and inspiration in Nadler's myth of the theatre-loving Austro-Bavarian tribe, he began to realize the value of the

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<sup>3</sup> R.S. [Rudolf Sobotka], 'Der heilige Gral', *Reichspost*, 14 June 1928, p. 5.

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mythopoeic approach in providing Austrians with inspiring versions of their history and better knowledge of their cultural heritage. The comparison between Hofmannsthal and Kralik is particularly valuable in this period as the rapprochement between them provides a measure both of Hofmannsthal's conservatism and of the changing cultural climate. It is partly a product of the difference in age between the two writers that the First World War made far more impact on the younger man. Whereas Kralik had, intellectually speaking, fought his major battle in the years of the *katholischer Literaturstreit* and, curious though this may sound, felt more at ease fighting enemies abroad than defending his literary position against attacks from within the Catholic community, Hofmannsthal, who turned forty in 1914, experienced it far more as a crisis in his creative life, one from which he only began to emerge once he had formulated his understanding of Austria's cultural mission and identified a role for himself within that.

As was argued in Chapter Seven, it is my firm belief that one needs to be familiar with the whole range of cultural activity in early-twentieth-century Austria, if one is to understand the Salzburg Festival in its contemporary socio-political context and to be sensitive to the reasons why the element of myth-making in Hofmannsthal's cultural ideology should have been so problematic. In practical terms the Festival did not compete with the Catholic *Laienspiel* movement any more than Reinhardt's experiments with arena theatre had done in the prewar period — because they targeted very different audiences; but in ideological terms they were certainly rivals. Hofmannsthal's claim to be rescuing the Catholic cultural heritage from almost total neglect becomes extremely hollow once one is aware that the Salzburg Festival co-existed with a grass-roots revival of Catholic drama which had been built up over a period of more than twenty years and had won substantial popular and political support. This, in its turn, has serious implications for the interpretation and reception of Hofmannsthal's festival plays.

Although Hofmannsthal wrote *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* specifically for the Salzburg Festival, the play never became its centrepiece, that honour being reserved for *Jedermann*. This must be attributed in substantial measure to the uniquely attractive performance tradition which Max Reinhardt established for the earlier festival play. However, I would also contend that, in celebrating the redemption of the solipsistic world theatre rather than Austria's lucky escape from communism, *Jedermann* makes a far more effective claim to timeless and universal relevance. Hofmannsthal wrote of

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*Das Salzburger große Welttheater* 'es ist neu und alt: so alle meine Sachen' (RA3 569). Although, as in *Jedermann* and in *Der Tor und der Tod*, his approach was strongly influenced by his sympathy with the fundamentally modern world-view of Goethe's *Faust*, by his faith in the spiritual resources of the individual, and by Konrad Burdach's interpretation of *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen*, all secular, modernizing impulses in *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* lie behind a facade which remains essentially that of Calderón's Counter-Reformation drama and are not strong enough to overcome its essential conservatism.

It was all the more difficult for Hofmannsthal to make Calderón's world theatre his own because that play was already so closely associated with Kralik and the political Catholicism of the 1890s, and can all too easily be viewed, alongside Othmar Spann's *Der wahre Staat* (1921), as anticipating the conservative social theories on which the Corporate State was founded. Consequently, *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* was rarely understood as Hofmannsthal had hoped. Naef, for example, wrote in 1938 that it achieved 'wohl die höchstmögliche Annäherung ans katholische Christentum' and should be viewed as 'die Bildwerdung der kirchlichen Sozialdoktrin'.<sup>4</sup> That Hofmannsthal failed to anticipate such difficulties is due largely to the selectivity of his traditionalism, to his somewhat naive desire to create for Austria the myth of an apolitical Catholic culture at a time when Catholic festival theatre had long ceased to be a novelty and the public process of myth-making could certainly not divorce itself from politics.

### 'Ausblick'

The history of Catholic drama in Austria of course extends far beyond the chronological limits of this study, not least insofar as Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann* continues today to be at the heart of the Salzburg Festival. Even within his lifetime, neither this nor *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* was the final adaptation of its model. At once reacting against Hofmannsthal's work and exploiting the popularity of the genre, Catholic writers produced their own versions, often making them more orthodox in theological terms and more

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<sup>4</sup> Karl J. Naef, *Hugo von Hofmannsthals Wesen und Werk* (Zurich and Leipzig: Niehans, 1938), p. 212.

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suitable for amateur performance. From 1924 onwards *Das große Welttheater* was performed annually in the Swiss town of Einsiedeln, and in Vienna the Catholic *Kunststelle* helped to stage an adaptation of the same play by Kaspar Mayr-Frisch, which took place in the Großer Musikvereinssaal on 30 June and 1 July 1923. Kralik not only wrote *Das große Theater der Welt* for the Viennese *Laienspiel* movement in 1926 but also produced an *Allermann* play at around the same time; there was a *Kölner Jedermann* in circulation, Georg Terramare reworked the English *Everyman* play for the pupils of Vienna's Schottengymnasium, and in 1927 Hermann Dimmler published *Jedermanns Sünde, Tod und Erlösung*. When this strongly Catholic adaptation was performed in Vienna as part of the 1928 *Allerseelenspiele*, the *Reichspost* stressed that 'in der vorliegenden Bearbeitung ist Sorge getragen, daß die inneren Vorgänge der Schuld, Reue und Versöhnung mit Gott fühl- und greifbar werden'.<sup>5</sup>

Striking a rather different note, Franz Löser, who had played the Herald in the Salzburg premiere of *Jedermann* and was to become a prominent cultural figure during the Nazi era, produced a dialect version of *Jedermann* with Hofmannsthal's approval in 1921. Since 1922 this has regularly been staged outside the church at Mondsee in the Salzkammergut.<sup>6</sup> Whereas in Hofmannsthal's relatively literary text the central figure was an aesthete who had a way with words, and his situation was intended to touch a chord with affluent big-city audiences, Löser made him a well-to-do farmer whose attitudes and material situation would be recognizable and comprehensible to a less educated rural audience, suffering from the economic difficulties of the interwar period. In this way Hofmannsthal indirectly achieved the ambition of incorporating his work into the indigenous folk tradition.

Extending the secularization and subjectivization of the Baroque model brought about by Hofmannsthal in *Das Salzburger große Welttheater*, the Neo-Classical dramatist Wilhelm von Scholz produced *Das deutsche große Welttheater* during the Second World War. First performed in Karlsruhe in 1941, it was later well-received in Vienna.<sup>7</sup> In spite of its ominously 'Aryan' title, *Das deutsche große Welttheater* is a play of almost timeless reflection, full of compassion rather than conflict. Scholz interprets Calderón's allegorical figures more freely than Hofmannsthal had done, is more explicit in showing

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<sup>5</sup> Anon., 'Wiener Allerseelenspiele', *Reichspost*, 2 November 1928, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Brian Keith-Smith, 'Der Mondseer "Jedermann"', *Hofmannsthal-Forschungen*, 8 (1985), 163–79.

<sup>7</sup> Sullivan, *Calderón in the German Lands and in the Low Countries*, pp. 357–58.

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their innate divinity, and allows all to achieve redemption. Whereas Hofmannsthal was most original in his treatment of the Beggar, for Scholz the key is Wisdom, an old man who falls in love with Beauty but ultimately renounces her for more lasting values.

These isolated examples, which prove above all the enduring fascination of the medieval and Baroque archetypes, are, however, far less important in terms of Austrian cultural history than the uses to which the work of Hofmannsthal and Kralik was put in the years immediately following their deaths (in 1929 and 1934 respectively), and the way in which the forms of Catholic drama which they had popularized were subsequently exploited. This study will therefore close by highlighting some of the continuities in the development of Austria's Catholic festival culture in the 1930s, by looking briefly at the fortunes of the Salzburg Festival in that period, and making a few remarks about Catholic cultural activity in the years immediately following 1945.

In the increasingly authoritarian atmosphere of the First Republic, the Catholic *Laienspiel* movement flourished, not only in Vienna but also in the Austrian provinces. As the economic situation deteriorated and more and more professional theatres were forced to close, the number of amateur and touring groups increased, often drawing in unemployed professional performers and winning official support by offering works with a Catholic, patriotic and *völkisch* emphasis. Although parliamentary democracy continued to be the official mode of government until 1933 and the Corporate State was not formally established until May of the following year, its cultural ideology was essentially in place well before that time, insofar as it was built on the Catholic culture of the 1920s: *Heimatkunst* blended with that conservative Austro-Catholicism with which Kralik's name had long been synonymous. This is borne out if one examines the 1934 volume *Katholische Dichtung in Österreich*, where Rudolf List surveys the literature on which the Corporate State was pinning its hopes. Appearing shortly after Kralik's death, it carries his portrait on its frontispiece and begins thus:

Will man von zeitgenössischer katholischer Dichtung in Österreich, oder besser gesagt, vom Anteil des Katholizismus an der deutschen Gegenwartsdichtung im österreichischen Raum berichten, so kann man nicht anders denn mit der überragenden Persönlichkeit Richard von Kraliks beginnen. [...] Denn der Glaube, der katholische Glaube, das Bekenntnis zur Kirche Christi, das Bekenntnis zur Heimat, zu Österreich, aber auch zu Vergangenheit und Zukunft der deutschen Nation war ihm zur alleinigen Quelle aller schöpferischer Betätigung geworden, in einem solchen Maße und in solcher Lauterkeit, daß der Name Kralik und der

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Begriff 'katholisches Österreich' kulturhistorisch zu einer Einheit von zweifellos bleibender Bedeutung ineinandergewachsen erschienen.<sup>8</sup>

Asserting that Kralik's influence can be felt in every area of Austria's Catholic literature, List urges the younger generation to approach his work 'in Demut und Ehrfurcht vor diesem schöpferischen Menschentum aus dem Geist des Glaubens'.<sup>9</sup>

A key objective in the cultural politics of the 1930s was the creation of a national Catholic festival culture: Vienna's Socialist festivals had shown the scale on which this type of ideological representation was possible; Kralik's work had proven that traditional forms of Catholic drama could be exploited to similar effect; and Hofmannsthal and Mell had been exemplary in creating mystery plays with a modern emphasis. The work which came closest to defining the genre was, however, Rudolf Henz's *'St. Michael, führe uns!'*, staged in Vienna's sports stadium in 1933, with a capacity crowd of fifty thousand. Although the production was part of the 'allgemeiner deutscher Katholikentag', it in fact became an Austrian event, as the *Tausend-Mark-Sperre*, a tax which Hitler imposed on Germans travelling abroad in that year, meant that very few Germans attended.

Henz's work, which is subtitled *Weihefestspiel der katholischen Jugend*, is not so much a theatrical event as a mass celebration of Austria's Catholic identity in which different groups of young people dedicate themselves to the service of the Catholic state and ask St Michael to protect them against its enemies, amongst them 'die Spekulanten in aller Welt', 'die Räuber unseres Eigentums', 'die Klassenkämpfer an allen Fronten', and 'die Sendlinge des Bolschewismus'.<sup>10</sup> The only real drama comes when a crowd of socialist workers enter the stadium singing the Internationale but are swiftly silenced by a procession of Christian workers carrying a large silver cross: 'Sie schreiten unbeirrt um das Geschrei und Gebrüll, ungeängstigt von den Drohungen derer, die schließlich das Stadion räumen, vor den Altaraufbau [...].'<sup>11</sup> Aside from

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<sup>8</sup> Rudolf List, *Katholische Dichtung in Österreich* (Vienna: Österreichische Bücherverband, [1934]), p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> Rudolf Henz, *Festliche Dichtung: Gesammelte Sprüche und Spiele* (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag für Unterricht, Wissenschaft und Kunst, 1935), pp. 36–37. For a detailed analysis of *'St. Michael, führe uns!'* see Karl Müller, 'Vaterländische und nazistische Fest- und Weihespiele in Österreich', in *Verspielte Zeit: Österreichisches Theater der dreißiger Jahre*, ed. by Hilde Haider-Pregler and Beate Reiterer (Vienna: Picus Verlag, 1997), pp. 150–69 (pp. 156–60).

<sup>11</sup> Henz, *Festliche Dichtung*, p. 37.

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the speeches of St Michael himself, most of the text is spoken by *Sprechchöre* rather than individuals (a necessary device given the size of the stadium but also a symbolic one). The gap between theatrical representation and political reality is reduced as these choirs basically play themselves (agricultural and industrial workers, students, members of various Catholic youth organizations) and therefore need no costume beyond the *Tracht*, uniform or work clothes which would normally identify their *Stand* or organizational affiliation; the only figure in costume is the Archangel himself who appears as an 'alter deutscher Kriegersmann'.<sup>12</sup>

Although '*St. Michael führe uns!*' was conceived on a far larger scale than any of Kralik's dramatic works, and even makes Reinhardt's endeavours seem quite modest in comparison, there are a number of striking continuities. Henz, like Kralik, produced practically no dramatic works other than festival plays; and it is clear from his theoretical introduction to the volume *Festliche Dichtung* that he too was committed to raising the cultural status of the genre — an undertaking to which Hofmannsthal had arguably made the most substantial contribution since 1918. Henz further resembled Kralik in believing that the prime objective of theatre should be *Volksbildung* rather than entertainment. As well as involving as many people as possible, he used such devices as communal hymn-singing in order to create a sacral atmosphere and transform the audience into active concelebrants: 'Es war also für mich von vornherein feststehend, daß ich bei solchen Festspielen nicht dem Publikum ein Spiel vormachen, sondern das Publikum selbst in das Spiel einbeziehen müßte.'<sup>13</sup>

Henz himself admitted that '*St. Michael führe uns!*' owed a considerable debt to Calderón. In particular, one can observe a number of similarities between the 1933 event and the Leo-Gesellschaft production of Calderón's *Der Ruhm Österreichs* (1898) which was discussed in Chapter Four. The idea of St Michael as the spiritual leader of the Republic (in 1933 the repeated use of the verb *führen* is no coincidence) is reminiscent of Kralik's prologue to the *auto sacramental*, in which the Guardian Spirit of Austria appears, heavensent to assure the audience that the Almighty is interested in their welfare and pleased with their progress. In both cases the intention is to replace the distinction between *Spiel* and reality with an all-enveloping mythopoeic

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<sup>12</sup> Henz, *Festliche Dichtung*, p. 39.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

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universe. '*St. Michael führe uns!*' has in common with an *auto sacramental* that it too ends with the celebration of the Eucharist. However, whereas in Calderón's Baroque drama that is part of the theatrical make-believe, in Henz's *Weihfestspiel* the sacramental procession of nine hundred bishops, priests and monks which made its way into the stadium was all too real and was led by no less than the Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Innitzer. At this point in the proceedings the actor playing St Michael stepped aside with these words:

Jetzt aber schweige Wort und Spiel,  
Es naht der Herr, der uns noch segnen will! [...]  
Er kommt, ich schau ihn schon im Lichterglanz  
Herschweben in der goldenen Monstranz.

Hereafter the Cardinal took over the role of mediating between heaven and earth, asking the assembled crowds a series of ritualized questions which had the response 'Wir wollen es!' and then giving the blessing.<sup>14</sup>

Although Henz argued that this kind of event was superior to the more oblique and allegorical forms of religious drama because its relevance to the present could never be in doubt, the 'Wiener religiöse Freilichtsspiele' of the late 1920s had taken a step towards blurring the distinction between *Spiel* and reality by staging works such as Kralik's Calderón adaptations as part of the church celebrations on major feast days and making the theatrical performance a prelude to the mass; but State and Church had never previously exploited the irrational power of cultic drama quite so deliberately, urging Austria's youth to live the myth in a way that Kralik would almost definitely have applauded. It is indeed a further parallel between the 1898 production of *Der Ruhm Österreichs* and '*St. Michael führe uns!*' that, as patriotic festivals, both ended not on a purely religious note but with the singing of the national anthem.

While one might argue that, by keeping Germans away from the 'allgemeiner deutscher Katholikentag' in 1933, Hitler's *Tausend-Mark-Sperre* gave a boost to Austria's Catholic festival culture, the Salzburg Festival found survival increasingly difficult. Having made a profit in 1930, it was hit hard by the absence of German visitors from 1933 onwards (the tax was only lifted in late August 1936) and by the fact that a number of prominent German

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<sup>14</sup> Henz, *Festliche Dichtung*, p. 45.

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musicians and performers either chose or were persuaded to stay away.<sup>15</sup> The organizers did everything possible to maintain the high artistic standards which people had come to expect from the Festival, but Hofmannsthal's dream that it would stand above politics and bring about reconciliation between the nations clearly failed to materialize. Instead, the Festival became a symbol of anti-fascist resistance and of Austria's struggle to maintain its independence; Hofmannsthal's festival ideology was effectively appropriated by the Corporate State, taking its place alongside Kralik's more conservative brand of Austro-Catholicism. Having played such a role, the Festival was immediately stripped of its distinct cultural identity in 1938 and reduced to a pale imitation of Bayreuth for the duration of the War.

During the 1930s National Socialist groupings had responded to the politicization of the Salzburg Festival by making it the subject of increasingly unpleasant anti-Semitic attacks. One perhaps slightly surprising effect of this was that the Catholic press, which in the 1920s had itself attacked the Festival in a very similar manner, generally became more supportive of it as an institution and also more complimentary about Hofmannsthal's work. The beginnings of this convergence of interest between the different brands of Austro-conservatism can be seen in Rudolf List's *Reichspost* obituary for Hofmannsthal, which praises his festival dramas as the highpoint of his career.<sup>16</sup> It is also significant that, when the Deutsches Volkstheater in Vienna staged Reinhardt's *Jedermann* production as a memorial for Hofmannsthal, the Catholic *Kunststelle* was extremely supportive, writing that this deeply religious work would be 'sicherlich ein Ereignis für die Theaterstadt Wien', and reserving several of the twenty-nine performances for its own members.<sup>17</sup>

At least as far as Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann* was concerned, there are signs that a degree of Catholic solidarity was maintained in the years immediately following 1945, insofar as that work, which was the first new production of the Burgtheater and was soon restored to the Festival repertoire, was also a popular choice for Catholic amateur groups in that period. It may seem surprising that the *Laienspiel* movement, which in many senses was already an anachronism in the 1920s, simply picked up where it had left off. However, the *Jahrbuch*

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<sup>15</sup> Gisela Prossnitz, "'Salzburg: Perhaps Art's Last Existing Sanctuary from the Political World" — The Salzburg Festival in the Thirties', in *Austria in the Thirties*, ed. by Segar and Warren, pp. 234–52.

<sup>16</sup> On Hofmannsthal's obituaries see W.E. Yates, *Schnitzler, Hofmannsthal, and the Austrian Theatre*, pp. 227–28.

<sup>17</sup> Anon., 'Jedermann', *Der Kunstgarten*, 8 (1929–30), 24.

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*der Gesellschaft für Wiener Forschung 1947/49* reveals that, in the Archdiocese of Vienna alone, numerous amateur drama groups were re-established along pre-1938 lines. How far this policy was a response to the very different cultural endeavours of the occupying Soviet forces (thereby potentially re-establishing the battle lines of 'Red Vienna') remains to be ascertained. It is, however, clear that the Catholic repertoire brought together both strands of Catholic cultural revival. The works staged by amateur groups in the late 1940s included not only Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann* and Mell's *Apostelspiel* but also Kralik's *Das Volksschauspiel vom Doktor Faust* and several Calderón autos, including *Die Geheimnisse der heiligen Messe*.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, with the founding of the Theater der Stephans-Spieler in 1946, Vienna's Catholic community briefly achieved the long-cherished aim of establishing its own professional theatre.

This apparently uncritical conservatism, which is implicit in so many of the continuities between the First Austrian Republic and the early years of the Second, raises grave questions. In the case of the Austrian Church one must ask whether its role in anti-Nazi resistance and the persecution which many Catholics experienced during the Second World War were sufficient to restore that moral authority which the events of the 1920s and 1930s had so compromised. Or might it be more appropriate to conclude that one reason for the tardiness of Austrian *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* has been the failure of Catholic intellectuals to reflect on the extent to which political Catholicism was responsible for the collapse of democracy in Austria and to acknowledge that the cultural forms it promoted may also have helped to make the country more receptive to fascism?

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<sup>18</sup> *Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für Wiener Forschung 1947/49*, ed. by the Institut für Theaterwissenschaft an der Universität Wien (Vienna: Söxl, 1954), pp. 60–63, 164–66. I am grateful to Dr Evelyn Deutsch-Schreiner for bringing this continuity to my attention and for allowing me to see extracts from her forthcoming *Habilitationsschrift*, working title, *Nachkriegstheater: Kunst und Politik in Österreich*.

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HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL had a lifelong fascination with the *theatrum mundi* topos. Judith Beniston analyses his changing responses to it against an unfamiliar backdrop — the revival of Catholic drama which, from the 1890s onwards, accompanied the rise of Austria's Christian Social party. The solipsism of 'Jung Wien' and the conservative modernism of the Salzburg Festival are juxtaposed with the career of Richard von Kralik (1852–1934), the key figure in Austria's Catholic literary culture from 1890 to 1934. This study offers close readings of *Das kleine Welttheater* and *Das Salzburger große Welttheater*, and explores the ramifications of the fascination with the notion of *Welttheater* which Hofmannsthal and Kralik shared. In juxtaposing elite and popular culture, Beniston sheds new light on a neglected aspect of Austrian cultural history, on the selectivity of Hofmannsthal's approach towards Austria's Baroque tradition, and on the difficulties he faced in his attempt to assimilate his own work into it.