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Source: *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Oct., 1918), pp. 487-488

Published by: [Modern Humanities Research Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3714043>

Accessed: 24/06/2014 23:51

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GRILLPARZER'S 'DES MEERES UND DER LIEBE WELLEN'
AND HOUWALD'S 'DER LEUCHTTURM.'

The relationship of these two plays has, we believe, not yet been noticed or discussed by critics of Grillparzer. *Der Leuchtturm* is a two-act tragedy written in the trochaic metre which Grillparzer employed in *Die Ahnfrau* and *Der Traum ein Leben*. It combines an idyllic romance of a lighthouse-keeper's daughter Dorothea and her lover Walther with a fantastic tale of passion and ingratitude, in which Walther's mother and a Graf von Holm are involved. The drama was first produced in Dresden in 1820, and was played altogether seventeen times at the Hofburgtheater in Vienna between January 8, 1822 and August 30, 1825¹.

The first act of *Der Leuchtturm* offers several points of comparison with Grillparzer's play. The scene is the upper part of the lighthouse in a small room into which at night the light shines down from the tower. Caspar, the keeper of the lighthouse, tries to persuade his daughter to take the veil; but she, having seen Walther on the shore, is unwilling to conform with his wishes. Grillparzer's Hero, too, is urged by her father to dedicate herself to the service of the gods; but in her case the awakening comes after the fatal step has been taken. There has been discord between Hero's parents owing to the extreme selfishness of her father; and in Houwald's play stress is laid on the unhappiness which common guilt has brought on Walther's mother and the Graf. In both plays it is the mother who suffers and who strives against fate to set matters right. Hero, as Dorothea, is looking out over the sea when her musings are interrupted by the entrance of her lover, Leander's appearance in the tower being as sudden and unexpected as Walther's. More closely analogous is the rôle played by the lamp in both dramas. It is the lamp, 'ein kleiner Stern, wie eine letzte Hoffnung,' which guides Leander to Hero's tower; and it is the lamp of the lighthouse which inspires hope in Walther's heart when, tossed by wind and wave, he expects every minute to meet his doom:

Denn gleich einem milden Sterne
Glänzt der Leuchtturm aus der Ferne.

In *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen* there are two contrasting scenes in which the lamp figures, one of awakening happiness and calm, the other of approaching disaster and storm; in Houwald there is only the

¹ Cp. E. Wlassak, *Chronik des k. k. Hofburgtheaters*, Vienna, 1876, p. 312.

storm. The catastrophe depends in both plays on the extinguishing of the light; and in both cases it is the heroine's uncle who extinguishes it. In Grillparzer this uncle is the high-priest; he is solicitous for his niece's welfare as he understands it, and zealous in carrying out the duties of the temple. Houwald's Dorothea has at her side the old and feeble brother of her father, who, half-crazed with grief, is as zealous in his purpose as the priest in Grillparzer. Dorothea, holding watch in the tower, pities the old man and asks: Has he seen:

Keines Leuchtturms helle Flammen,
Wo die Liebe für dich wacht?

Hero, who keeps 'der Liebe süsse Wacht,' thinks only of Leander till weariness overcomes her and she falls asleep; when the priest places her lamp where the storm will blow it out. In Houwald's play Dorothea's uncle creeps in while she and her lover are oblivious to their surroundings and extinguishes the light. Hero laments passionately when she finds her lover's guiding star gone; Dorothea wrings her hands in despair when she realises that her neglect of her duty has resulted in a shipwreck. There is little in common between the dénouements of the two plays except perhaps the finding of the body—in Houwald that of Walther's mother, in Grillparzer Leander's—on the shore; but this was a traditional feature in the Greek story. There is, however, some similarity in the close of both plays. Dorothea's uncle and Walther's mother are joined in death, as are Hero and Leander. The Graf speaks of them as 'selig dort vereint,' while Iantke in Grillparzer voices her thoughts in the words: 'Zwei Leichen und ein Grab. O gönnt es ihnen!'

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LONDON.