SCHWEIG UND TANZE!
Elektra, of Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss.[1]

Esti Sheinberg

The last scene of Richard Strauss' *Elektra* builds tension towards Elektra's dance of victory and joy, leading to her ecstatic abdication in death. This scene was described by the opera's librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal, in one of his 'sketches,' as Elektra's 'dissolution of self.'[2]

> "Meine antiken Stücke haben es alle drei mit der Auflösung des Individualbegriffes zu tun. In der "Elektra" wird das Individuum in der empirischen Weise aufgelöst, indem eben der Inhalt seines Lebens es von innen her zersprengt, wie das sich zu Eis umbildende Wasser einen irdenen Krug. Elektra ist nicht mehr Elektra, weil sie eben ganz und gar Elektra zu sein sich weihte. Das Individuum kann nur schemenhaft dort bestehen bleiben, wo ein Kompromiß zwischen dem Gemeinen und dem Individuellen geschlossen wird." (*Aufzeichnungen,* 201).
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> My three 'antiquity' works relate all to the dissolution of the concept of the individual. In *Elektra*, the individuum is empirically dissolved, in the sense that her life bursts from within as water that becomes ice in a clay jar. Elektra is no more Elektra, because she consecrated herself to be Elektra. The individuum can only stay in the shade, as a compromise reached between the collective and the individuality."

Hofmannsthal wrote this note sometime in 1925 or 1926, more than twenty years after the staging of his play, in an attempt to explain – to others or even to himself – the strange death he envisaged for his heroine. The 'dissolution', or 'self recasting' of an individual personality into another, collective shape, is a complex idea, with major philosophical and theological implications. It is not an idea that could be easily translated into drama or, moreover, an opera. Nevertheless, it is the core of both Hofmannsthal's 1903 play and Richard Strauss's opera that followed six years later.

In a post-Wagnerian world, musical 'dissolution' is not hard to imagine, and Elektra's 'dissolution' could be traced back to the most famous 'dissolution of self' that the musical world had known to that time: Isolde's *Liebestod*, that ends Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* (premièred 1865). However, Isolde's death is an event that she undergoes passively as an inevitable process: it is not a result of her own making or a goal that she consciously pursues. Elektra, on the other hand, actively perpetrates her 'dissolution' dancing ecstatically toward her own death. Isolde's purely spiritual experience is thus transformed here into a tangible, physical reality.

Ecstatic Dance as Dissolution of Self

Elektra's ecstatic dance takes part toward the end of the play. The stage directions indicate that Elektra 'has lifted herself. She strides from the doorstep inside. She has her

[1] I would like to thank Ms. Smitha Boorgula for her help in reading and understanding the context of the relevant Hindu literature. I would not be able to find my way in this vast corpus without her kind and patient assistance.

[2] Hofmannsthal, *Aufzeichnungen*, 201, referred to in Yates, 137.

head thrown back like a Maenad. She throws up her knees, she stretches her arms out in a nameless dance, in which she moves forward.'[3] To the call of Chrysothemis to join her and Orestes in the palace, to celebrate their victory and their renewed life, Elektra replies:

Elektra *bleibt stehen, sieht starr auf sie hin*	**Elektra** *remains standing, stares stiffly ahead*:
Schweig, und tanze. Alle müssen	Keep silent and dance. Everybody must
herbei! hier schließt euch an! Ich trage die Last	join in! Here, take your place. I carry the burden
des Glückes, und ich tanze vor euch her.	of joy, and here I dance for you.
Wer glücklich ist wie wir, dem ziemt nur eins:	To those who are happy as we are, befits just one thing:
schweigen und tanzen!	Keep silent and dance.
Sie tut noch einige Schritte des angespanntesten Triumphes und stürzt zusammen.	*She dies screaming a cry of triumph.*

This scene, in which Elektra moves 'like a Maenad,' reverberates with the echoes of Nietzsche's *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* (1871). Indeed, many Hofmannsthal's scholars did not fail to notice Nietzsche's influence on the writer.[4] Nevertheless, this scene includes structural elements that are incongruent with Nietzschean views. For example, a work climaxing in the 'dissolution of self' could ostensibly contradict Nietzsche's rejection of the '*anti-life* Christian idea of *unselving*,' claiming it to be a major, if not *the* major point of his philosophy (Del Caro, 7).

Another puzzling element in this scene is Elektra's text, which in this scene includes an element that seems particularly incongruent in this context: the Ocean. Elektra complains that the ocean's "monstrous" weight prevents her from moving at the very moment in which 'they are all waiting, because I am the one who must lead the circle of the dance':

Elektra *auf der Schwelle kauernd*	**Elektra** *crouched on the threshold*
Ob ich nicht höre? ob ich die	How could I not hear? How could I
Musik nicht höre? sie kommt doch aus mir.	not hear the music? It is from me that it comes forth.
Die Tausende, die Fackeln tragen	The thousands who carry the torches
und deren Tritte, deren uferlose	whose heavy footsteps, innumerable,
Myriaden Tritte überall die Erde	myriad footsteps all over the earth,
dumpf dröhnen machen, alle warten	making sullen echoes, they are all waiting
auf mich: ich weiß doch, daß sie alle warten,	for me: I know that they are all waiting,
weil ich den Reigen führen muß, und ich	because I am the one who must lead the circle of the dance, and I
kann nicht, der Ozean, der ungeheure,	cannot, the Ocean, the monstrous,
	The twenty-fold ocean buries

[3] *Elektra schreitet von der Schwelle herunter. Sie hat den Kopf zurückgeworfen wie eine Mänade. Sie wirft die Knie, sie reckt die Arme aus, es ist ein namenloser Tanz, in welchem sie nach vorwärts schreitet.* (Hoffmansthal, 1966, 74.)

[4] Adrian del Caro, for example, seems to believe that Nietzsche's influence is so vital for the understanding of Hofmannsthal, that he devotes all his first chapter to the explanation of Nietzsche's ideas without even mentioning Hofmannsthal at all (Del Caro, 1993)

der zwanzigfache Ozean begräbt	every limb of mine under its weight, I can not
mir jedes Glied mit seiner Wucht, ich kann mich	lift myself!
nicht heben!	

These lines appear at the beginning of Elektra's 'dissolution' and lead to her final dance, into which, overcoming the immense weight of the ocean, she rises and 'strides forward.' Alone, dancing euphorically as in ecstatic trance, the stage directions demand that she resemble 'a Maenad.' The ecstatic dance of Elektra is, then, Nietzschean, being *both* her liberating statement of Self and her ecstatic abandon, her 'dissolution of self.'

Being "buried under the weight of the ocean" is not a Nietzschean experience, neither does it characterize any of the other two most commonly quoted sources of influence on Hofmannsthal's thought and writing: Goethe and Schopenhauer. Nevertheless, the incongruity of this image with the dramatic context as well as its strategic positioning at *Elektra*'s last scene calls for attention, and its understanding seems crucial for a careful and coherent interpretation of the work. What is the meaning of the ocean, why is it mentioned at this point of the text and what is the role of its 'monstrous weight', preventing Elektra from starting the dance? Does Elektra's Self dissolve *into* the ocean? If the weight of the ocean is *on* her, does she rise *into* it?

This scene, then, presents two questions. The first concerns Elektra's motion: does her dance reflect Hofmannsthal's following alleged Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* 'stage directions' for her 'dissolution of self,' or is there more to it? The second question relates to Elektra's words: what is the role and meaning of the image of the ocean? Elektra's final dance has been widely discussed.[5] Gilliam, in his detailed analysis of the opera, devotes a whole chapter to the last scene, pointing at the central role of music at the point where the textual nuances 'made their way to the orchestra pit rather than to the stage,' leading to the final words of Elektra: 'be silent and dance.'[6] Gilliam detects two types of dances in this scene: an ecstatic dance that belongs to the domain of the individual, and has no clear rules: Hofmannsthal, in his stage directions, calls this type 'a nameless dance'; the other type is a group circle dance, bound to social custom. Elektra mentions this dance, but it is never performed on stage. Gilliam states that *E* major is the key that Strauss typically used 'to express Dionysian, passionate, or even erotic sensations in music.'[7] He also argues that the musical sections in *C* major represent the alleged social dance circle. However, his discussion virtually ignores the *F* minor tonality that presides around the four lines of text where Elektra speaks about the weight of the ocean that prevents her from lifting her body to the *circle* dance, the one she feels she is 'the one who must lead.'[8] He does not analyze the obvious textual and musical incongruities of this passage, nor its juxtaposition with the rest of the scene. How does the music express Elektra's unexplained ability to build her strength and overcome the vast 'weight of the Ocean,' and how does the *F* minor tonality help to signify this transition? What are the cultural units that stand at the basis of Hofmannsthal's artistic discourse and how does the music of Strauss correlate with them?

[5] For an almost exhaustive bibliography on this subject see Gilliam.
[6] Gilliam, 48.
[7] Gilliam, 223 ff.
[8] This passage is specified in Gilliam's table 7.1, p.229.

Dance as Wordless Authenticity

Hofmannsthal's play is described as a 'free adaptation' of Sophocles' *Electra*. However, Sophocles' Electra doesn't dance nor die. Both her victorious dance and her death or 'dissolution' are Hofmannsthal's invention. The incorporation of dance at the end of the drama expresses Hofmannsthal's newly acquired awareness of the expressive and communicative incapacity of words, followed by his change of career to theater, with its artistic techniques based on gesture, pantomime and dance. His famous 'Lord Chandos Letter'[9] from 1901-2, which is generally interpreted as his renunciation of poetry, his major form of expression till then, marks the end of a long process of incubation.[10] While he might have perceived the use of words as a sign of the loss of self, and their 'babble' a component in the general world of anti-life,[11] the 'Lord Chandos letter' expresses not only the feeling of words are devoid of meaning, but also points at another, newly acquired possibility of signification:

> 'Das Bild dieses Crassus ist zuwelien nachts in meinem Hirn, wie ein Splitter, um den herum alles schwart, pulst und kocht. Es ist mir dann, als geriete ich selber in Gärung, würfe Blasen auf, wallet und funkelte. Und das Ganze ist eine Art fieberisches Denken, aber Denken in einem Material, das unmittelbarer, flüssiger, glühender ist als Worte. Es sind gleichfalls Wirbel, aber solche, die nicht wie die Wirbel der Sprache ins Bodenlose zu führen scheinen, sondern irgendwie in mich selber und in den tiefsten Schoß des Friedens. (Hofmannsthal (1901-2), *Prosa II*: 19)
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> "Now and then at night the image of this Crassus is in my brain, like a splinter round which everything festers, throbs, and boils. It is then that I feel as though I myself were about to ferment, to effervesce, to foam and to sparkle. And the whole thing is a kind of feverish thinking, but thinking in a medium more immediate, more liquid, more glowing than words. It, too, forms whirlpools, but of a sort that do not seem to lead, as the whirlpools of language, into the abyss, but into myself and into the deepest womb of peace." (Hofmannsthal, 1901-2, 140)

A 'feverish,' 'liquid' thinking, 'more glowing than words,' of a person who is 'about to ferment, to effervesce, to foam and to sparkle': these phrases were written by someone whose cultural background and verbal eloquence were so sophisticated that he could join the established circle of Viennese intellectuals as an equal among equals at the incredibly young age of 17. On the other hand, dramatic changes of attitude are quite common during teenage years, at the point where reality seems more incongruent than ever with the world of ideas and ideologies.

Hofmannsthal discovered that words lie; that they cannot capture the complete, true essence of what a person can communicate nor of what his interlocutor is able to perceive. Consequently, he began to regard words as a part of the *world of appearances*: a Platonic concept that, after being contended by Kant, was re-applied by Schopenhauer in his *The World as Will and Appearance* (1819), where it was enriched by the exotic repercussions of a new concept: the *Maja veil*, an expression that Schopenhauer took from Hindu philosophy signifying *deception*.[12] Words, then, are an unavoidable *Maja*

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[9] Hofmannsthal, Hugo von (1952) "The Letter of Lord Chandos," in *Hugo von Hofmannsthal: Selected Prose,* translated by Mary Hottinger and Tania & James Stern (Kingsport, Tennessee, Pantehon Books, Bollingen Series XXXIII), pp.129-141.

[10] Gilliam, 21.

[11] Del Caro, 24-5. The apparent paradox between this view and the last scene, where Elektra's 'dissolution of self' seems directly related to her request to 'keep silent and dance!' is important to note, and relates directly to Hofmannsthal's insistent description of Elektra's death as a 'dissolution of the individual' which, as it will be shown later, should not be necessarily interpreted as 'death'.

[12] Schopenhauer was introduced to Indian philosophy during his late adolescence years in Weimar, through his acquaintance with Goethe and the indologist Friedrich Majer, who belonged to the same intellectual

veil of human communication that hinders both a genuine expression and an authentic reception. The inevitable conclusion was that authentic communication must be wordless, bodily gesture and pantomime, which allow for an indisputably genuine human expression. In his famous article of 1911, "On Pantomime," Hofmannsthal elaborates this idea, presenting dance as a human activity that, because it is based on motion and gesture, is a human expression that is genuine, true, pure, direct and unpolluted by words. [13] Dance is the absolute way to recognize one's own 'truest impulses': when witnessing a dance, a person can look at it as to a mirror, that will reflect his truest, deepest self.

Hofmannsthal's early poems are full with imagery that can be traced back to a wide range of literary sources; his book reviews, articles and lectures of the early 1890s display a self-assured acquaintance with the classics and a remarkable awareness of his contemporaries. Much of his rejection of the European reliance on verbal expression owes itself to the influence exercised on him – at a very early age - by Nietzsche's writings. For example, his 1891 article on 'The Physiology of Modern Love' discusses Nietzschean ideas at considerable length and depth.[14] Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* (1871) unveiled the dark, inhuman and chaotic aspects of ancient Greek culture, thus breaking the long European tradition that idealized it as idyllic and innocent, replaced by brutal Dionysian worship and frenzied Maenadic dances. Thus, ancient Greek culture both lost its innocence *and* supplied a new, authentic, deeply human psychological tool of expression of the dark side of the human soul. Non-verbal communication was now perceived as an expression of primeval instincts, one that enables a direct touch with some deep truth that words cannot reach.

The Perception of Dance at the *fin-de-siècle*

The influence of this article on both art and the development of psychology as a science can hardly be underestimated. It is impossible to think of post-Wagnerian art nor about Freudian psychology without the influence of Nietzsche's work. It enabled both Freud and his readers not just the intellectual stimulus to delve into Greek mythology, drama and literature with a new insight, but also the courage to look eye to eye at the bare human soul with its hidden complex web of human desires, instincts, unfathomable urges and uncontrollable impulses. By the end of the century there was hardly an artist, writer, philosopher or musician that was not sensitive to the problems of verbal communication, or looking for non-verbal alternatives: primitive, sub-conscious, dream-like expressions that were perceived as reflecting authenticity, essence, the true nature of the human soul.

Dance, around the fin-de-siècle, signified authenticity, and its main stars, artists like Isadora Duncan (1878-1927) or Vaslav Nijinsky (1890-1950), were admired for the *spiritual meaning* of their art no less – and perhaps more – than for their artistic abilities. In search of authentic expression, both dance and theater moved through a de-verbalization process. Playwrights like Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) and Lev Tolstoy (1828-1910), directors and producers like Otto Brahm (1856-1912), Gerhart Hauptmann (1862-1946), Max Reinhardt (1873-1943), Konstantin Stanislavsky (1863-1938), Yevgeny

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circle. As is shown below, Hofmannsthal did not take this idea just from Schopenhauer, but was acquainted with European writings about Indian philosophy, particularly through Max Friedrich Müller's *Essays zur vergleichenden Religionsgeschichte* (1876), Paul Deussen's translation of the *Upanishads* (1897), as well as the latter's *Die Philosophie der Upanishad's* (1899).

[13] Hofmannsthal, 1911, 505.

[14] "Zur Physiologie der modernen Liebe" in *Reden und Aufsätze I,* p.93-98.

Vakhtangov (1883-1922) and Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874-1940) and even the young Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) were all looking, in one way or another, to the immediacy and sincerity of gesture, pantomime or dance, that would convey the true nature of the human feelings, desires and urges that they were trying to express.

At the time he was writing *Elektra*, Hofmannsthal was reading the works of Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer.[15] In that he was not alone: the new interest in human instincts and impulses that was enhanced by the new science of psychology, had also a tremendous impact in its popularization. The writings of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), in particular his *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899) and "Sexuality in the Aetiology of the Neuroses" (1900), led to an open, sometimes quasi-exhibitionist interest in sexuality. Sexuality became a major subject of art-dance and, with the historically parallel movements for women's equality (albeit with paradoxical results, that can be seen from the perspective of a century), a new artistic entity was created: the (dancing) *femme fatale*. At the beginning of the 20th century Europe seemed flooded by female new art-dancers, such as Loie Fuller, Ruth St Denis, Mata Hari, Maud Allan, and others, all of whom seemed to emphasize some aspect of exoticism in their dance.[16] Indeed, after being implied in 19th century's music, overt discourse on eroticism and sexuality acquired a central role in fin-de-siècle visual and theatrical arts. The explicit paintings of Gustav Klimt (1862-1918) and Egon Schiele (1890-1918) are good examples of the former, while dancers like Mata Hari and Vaslav Nijinski, each in his own style, incorporated explicit erotic imagery in their choreographies. The great theater pièce-de-scandale of this period was Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*, that combined perverted sexuality with erotic dancing. Its 1902 private début in Berlin, in Max Reinhardt's experimental Kleines Theater, became a milestone in the history of 20th century theater. Richard Strauss's *Salome* (1905), with a libretto adapted from Wilde, remains a controversial piece till this day.

There is no doubt that Germany – and particularly Berlin - was the center of the fin-de-siècle artistic activity, as shows the travel itinerary of Isadora Duncan, in the years 1900-1910: from her agent's point of view, Isadora Duncan's arrival to Germany, just months after *Salomé's* scandalous début, could not have been better timed. Duncan herself, however, was not easily bought into cheap popularization of her art. Regarding ecstatic dancing not only an artistic achievement, but a quasi-religious, spiritual event, she strongly objected to any insinuations that her performance was anything less than that. In her memoirs she describes her reaction to a very attractive monetary offer from a German impresario:

> "I shouted at him that I had come to Europe to bring about a great renaissance of religion through the Dance, to bring the knowledge of the Beauty and Holiness of the human body through its expression of movements, and not to dance for the amusement of the overfed bourgeoisie after dinner.
>
> "Please go away! Allez vous en!
>
> "You refuse one thousand marks a night?" he gasped.
>
> "Certainly," I replied sternly, "and I would refuse ten thousand, one hundred thousand. I am seeking something which you don't understand." (Duncan, 65)

Isadora Duncan arrived in Germany toward the end of 1902, and her Berlin début was in January 1903. "I was bewildered, in driving through the town, to find the entire city one

[15] Gilliam, 28.
[16] Kurth, 226

flaming poster of my name," she tells, adding that she "took Berlin by storm."[17] Her tendency to explain and preach her theories on dance and the historical lines she drew from ancient Greek dance to her own art must have suited the German bourgeois public who were focused on *Bildung* (Kurth, 101).[18] Moreover, her reliance on Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, combined with demonstrations of barefoot 'ecstatic dancing,' wearing 'loose' garments that for her signified an ideological statement, while for many in her public might have discreetly signified something less respectable, could not be better suited to this public. Did Richard Strauss attend one of her performances? Perhaps. After all, he did attend Reinhardt's private performance of *Salomé* in Berlin around the same time, and surely could not have missed the advertisements of Duncan's dance. Neither could Hofmannsthal ignore the famous American eccentric. Indeed, Duncan does appear in Hofmannsthal's reviews of that time, but never as a main subject or in a complimentary way: apparently, her approach to her art was too academic for the critic who began, by that time, to abhor words and verbal explanations of art. "Die Duncan hatte etwas von einem sehr gewinnenden und leidenschaftlich dem Schönen hingegebenen Professor der Archäologie," he writes dryly.[19] Regardless of her critics, Duncan did take her art in utter earnest: densely marked copies of Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* and *Zarathustra* were kept by the side of her bed. Moving to Paris in 1899, she indeed did her best to apply Nietzsche's ideas to dance, giving *spiritual ecstasy* a new status as an aesthetic criterion for this art.[20]

Dance and Exoticism at the *fin-de-siècle*

The encounter of Western artists – musicians, dancers, painters, writers and actors – with Oriental arts at the international exhibition in Paris in 1889 contributed significantly to the impact of Oriental culture on the fine-de-siècle Europe.[21] The participation of Oriental artists, dancers and musicians in the exhibition, however, was a result of this process no less than catalyst a to it.

The 19th century saw a gradual departure from institutionalized Christianity. Various causes contributed to this process. While the beginning of the century was still affected by Napoleonic secularization, the growing importance of Romantic mysticism, combined with the rise in the worth of personal thoughts, feelings and needs encouraged the formation of many new religious movements. Napoleon's laws, that granted freedom of worship to all religions, had a central role not only in giving emancipation to Jews, for example, who became – legally if not practically – full citizens with equal rights. They also lent recognition to the sheer *legitimacy* of other ways of religious belief and worship, and new religious fractions of Christianity, that were seeking more genuine, authentic and personalized forms of worship. On one hand, this spiritual revival was expressed within Christian denominations. Evangelical fervor and spiritual renewal were at the core of hundreds of new missionary societies all over Europe and North America that extended

[17] Duncan, 85
[18] Kurth, 101
[19] Hofmannsthal, 1906, 501. "Duncan has a kind of the very charming and passionate beauty of a devoted archeology professor"
[20] Kurth, 103. A recently published book by Kimerer L. LaMothe, *Nietzsche's Dancers* (Palgrave MacMillan), 2006, deals with the combination of Nietzschean theory, anti-Christian ideas, and dance, focusing on Isadora Duncan and Martha Graham.
[21] The repercussions of this inter-cultural encounter in European arts are vast, and its description is beyond the limits of this paper. Hofmannsthal makes a reference to the exhibition in his review of Ruth St. Denis (Hofmannsthal, 1906, 499).

their branches to India, Japan, China, Africa, Latin America and the United States. Translations to various languages of the Christian scriptures were printed and distributed. International Christian societies such as the YMCA were established (1844) and an "Evangelical Alliance" was formed. However, there was also a strong anti-institutionalized movement, that emphasized the importance of a personalized devotion, and that saw an ideal in the unique connection between the individual and God, a devotion that could acquire any form, not necessarily within Christianity. Various mystical societies were formed, and those that already existed – strengthened and expanded. The emphasis on individual worship coincided with the Romantic preference for an individualized way of life in general, of sincerity and personal meaningfulness of worship above any other religious value. Another trend was neo-Paganism, hinted at in Nietzsche's writings but also developed as a continuous trend of Romantic Nationalism – particularly in Germany. This new search for authentic spirituality also increased the interest in other spiritual disciplines, mainly mysticism. This joined the general interest in the East and Oriental cultures to form societies interested in Buddhism and Hinduism not as a part of ethnological, historical or nationalistic studies, but as a spiritual option that could be opened to any person. The most famous instance of a spiritual immersion in Buddhism is the case of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, but, regardless of personal fame, she was just one of many who took interest in a variety of non-European, mystical and neo-Pagan religious practices.[22]

It is important to bear in mind that the German interest in Oriental studies had a particular twist. Starting from Herder (1749-1803), German scholars regarded Indian philosophy and culture as a source of their own culture and tradition, and saw a racial and cultural continuum between the ancient *Aryans* and themselves.[23]

Herder's *Von deutscher Art und Kunst* (1773) and his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-1791) had a huge influence on the Romantic perception of the primeval, uncorrupted, pure spirit of the simple people: the*Volk*. These works were the seed from which grew the early works of German Orientalism, and from which developed the idea of the Germans as an Aryan race, the spiritual sources of which can still be found in Indian philosophy. Thus, any German "Orientalist" work, even a purely fancy, poetic work like Goethe's *West-Östlicher Divan* (1814), can be seen within this general cultural context, that clustered into one cultural unit nationalism, spirituality, purity of race and individual integrity. Schopenhauer's interest in Buddhism, and his viewing of it as a philosophical solution to the Existential question of the human condition is tinted with nationalistic hues. In this respect, dance acquires another layer of significance: the admiration exerted by the neo-nationalistic movements in Germany as well as in Russia, at the turn of the century, to the pagan, primitive and non-verbal, led naturally to a renewed appreciation of the human body. It is important to remember that this appreciation was nationalistic rather than humanistic, leading thus to works like Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* (1913). In Germany it led to an attitude that bordered with worship of the naked human body. Although there are no overt nationalistic

[22] For a full discussion of these practices and their background see Carlson (1993) and Godwin (1994), themselves probably a result of the 20th century New-Age wave, very similar to the one that preceded it, exactly one hundred years earlier, both being a part of a larger, "millennial" trend in Western thought.

[23] For a comprehensive and fascinating look into the German nationalist interest in Indian culture see Kontje (2004). Kontje regards the German fascination with the East as a special case of "spiritual colonialism."

allusions in *Elektra*, the raw feelings as well as the centrality of the dance scene does lend the neo-Teutonic, an essentially primitive tinge.

The West-European – and especially, German fin-de-siècle cultural equation, which provided the basis of a whole wealth of literature, poetry, music, art, theatre and dance, is therefore embarrassingly simplistic, having three premises: (1) The Western world is corrupt with political power-struggles and individual insincerity. In contrast to that, East is good and sincere; (2) Christianity is corrupt and based on hypocrisy and cruelty, as demonstrated by the endless religious wars and prejudices. Therefore, Buddhism and Hinduism, which do not belong to the Judeo-Christian religious tradition, are genuine, true and pure; and, additionally – (3) Buddhism and Hinduism are Aryan, and therefore are directly and personally related to *us, the Germans.*

Once the Indian, Javanese, Japanese and Chinese art were perceived as pure and innocent, they took over the cultural role hitherto fulfilled by ancient Greece, previously considered to serve *as an ideal*.

Both Nietzsche's work and the Paris international Exhibition revolutionized the European perception of dance. Dance in itself was cherished because it was devoid of words, providing a way to express and perceive the deepest, most genuine, primeval human desires and intuitions. More specifically, Oriental dance was 'worthier' because it represented purity and innocence as well as a feeling of cultural continuation and belonging to an Aryan cultural community, with roots that go back to the far past of humanity. In his 1906 review of the dancer Ruth St. Denis, Hofmannsthal expresses precisely this feeling.[24] He starts with a hypothetical inquiry as to the nationality of the dancer: Is she Canadian? Does she have native American roots? Is she Indian or Australian? He is mesmerized by her dance, by her 'non-womanly' smile, by her starting position, "like Buddha's Lotus Flower".[25] He compares her with Isadora Duncan eulogizing St. Denis's genuine, pure expression versus the theoretical, 'professor of archeology' style of Duncan. Full of poetic imagery, this journalistic review, the normal communication vehicle of which are, after all, words, resorts to sensual immediacy. Hofmannsthal quotes the sculptor Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), explaining what he means by saying that a group of Oriental dancers have "the right movement":

> "Muß ich das wirklich erklären? Die Bewegungen dieser Frauen, wenn sie tanzen, sind richtig. Die Bewegungen der europäischen Tänzerinnen sind falsch. Man kann das nicht erklären, aber es ist gar nicht zu diskutieren, man fühlt es mit dem Auge, so wie man falsche Noten mit dem Ohr fühlt." (Hofmannsthal, 1906, 499)
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> Do I really need to spell it out? The movement of these women, when they dance, is right. The movement of the European female dancers is false. You can't explain this, but there can be no question about that, you can feel this with your eyes in the same way that you feel a false note with your ear.

Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Hindu Literature

Hofmannsthal's acquaintance with Indian philosophy, and the influence that this thought had on his writing, are widely discussed by Zelinsky, who refers to a quote from the Indologist Friedrich Max Müller's *Essays zur vergleichenden Religionsgeschichte* (1876), whose authority as a great scholar of Indian culture was unquestionable at the time, appears in one of the earliest of Hofmannsthal's writings, when the poet was barely

[24] "Die unvergleichliche Tänzerin." Hofmannsthal, 1906.
[25] Hofmannsthal, 1906, 499

17 years old.[26] Other writings of his, from this period and onward, support the impression that his fascination with the exotic was not superficial. I will argue that the four lines of Elektra's text about the weight of the ocean allude to Hindu concepts that appear in Vedic literature with which he familiarized himself since at least 1897.[27]

In the vast Indian Vedic literature, the imagery of the ocean is not a very frequent one. One of the few times it appears is in one of the lesser Upanishads, part of the Atharvaveda, the relatively most recent (and therefore less canonized) of the Vedas. The image appears in the Yoga-Upanishad chapter, in a poem called the Cûlikâ-Upanishad. Modern renditions of Vedic literature tend to neglect the Atharvaveda, and focus on the more central Rig-Veda, Sama-Veda or Ayur-Veda. However, precisely this less-common source appears in the 1897 collection of *Upanishad* translations by Paul Deussen, then a professor at Kiel University. In this collection, dedicated to 'The man Schopenhauer,' that Hofmannsthal read most probably very near to its date of publication, we find the following text:

15. Der das Avyaktam als Vyaktam
    Vierundzwanzigfach sichtbar macht,
    Als zweiheitlos und zweiheitlich,
    Als dreifach, fünffach kennt man ihn. [ft1 Dsn]
16. Durch dir Erkenntnis als Auge
    Sehn Brahmanen von Brahman an
    Bis in die Pflanzenwelt abwärts
    Sich hindurchziehn den Einen nur.
17. Dem eingewoben dies Weltall,
    Was sich bewegt und nicht bewegt,
    In Brahman auch vergeht alles
    Wie Schaumblasen im Ocean.
18. In ihm, in dem die Weltwesen
    Einmündend, werden unsichtbar,
    Vergehn sie und erstehn wieder
    Gleich Schaumblasen zur Sichtbarkeit.
19. Daß er als Seele im Leib weilt,
    Zeigt aus Gründen der Weise auf,
    Und daß als Gott er stets wieder
    Die Wohnung wechselt tausendfach.
20. Wer satzungstreu als Brahmane
    Dies bei dem Totenmahle lehrt

15. There the Avyaktam as Vyaktam
    Twenty-four fold he makes visible,
    As non-duality and duality,
    As threefold, fivefold he is known. [ft1 Dsn]
16. Through your insight, like eyes,
    See Brahmans of Brahman
    Until down, in the plants-world
    They pull themselves through toward the One.
17. to him [in] the universe is woven,
    what moves and what does not move,
    into Brahman also goes everything
    like foam [bubbles] into the Ocean.
18. In him, into whom the world's creatures
    merge, become invisible,
    they go away and rise
    appearing just like bubbles.
19. So he lingers as a soul in the body,
    pointing the way out of [to?] the ground
    And so, like God, he always again
    His dwellings changes thousandfold.
20. [the one] who is true to the law as the Brahmans
    who teaches the funeral ceremony
    attains for himself and the forefathers

[26] Zelinsky, 137. The reference he gives is to Hofmannsthal's 'Die Mutter,' in *Reden und Aufsätze I*, pp. 100-105
[27] Zelinsky, 144

Erlangt für sich und die Väter
Speis' und Trank, unvergängliche.
21. Doch wer Brahman und sein Gesetz,
Sei er Brahmane oder nicht,
Erkennt, der schwindet, einmünded
Zu dem in Brahman Ruhenden,
– zu dem in Brahman ruhenden. [ft 3 Dsn]**

unending [supply of] food and drink.
21. Though who the Brahman and his law [follows?]
whether he is Brahman or not
recognizes, disappears, merges
To rest in Brahman,
– to rest in Brahman. [ft 3 Dsn]**

Deussen's footnotes are interesting. When a certain image appears in other Upanishads, he goes through the trouble of cross-referencing footnotes. Moreover, when he is not completely pleased with his own translation, he meticulously supplies the exact meaning of the Sanskrit words and expressions, thereby pointing to possible poetic ambiguities and semantic complexities, a quality that must have appealed to Hofmannsthal's verbal sensitivities.[28] In a footnote, Deussen supplies an extra explanation for the last sentence of this Upanishad:

> Wörtlich: "sie gehen auf in Brahman (tatraiva), indem (wie bei den Flüssen Chând. 6,10 Mund. 3,2,8) ihre Mündungen hinschwinden (lynâsyâh) zur Vereinigung mit dem (bereits) im Brahman-Ozean Befindlichen (Brahma-çâyine, Dativ des Zweckes)" (Deussen, 641)
>
> [Literally: they go in to Brahman, (as with the rivers in the Chândogiya and Mundaka Upanishads) vanish into his mouth to unite with what already is in the Brahman-Ocean.]

Deussen inclusion of rivers with the image of the ocean is interesting: the repeating – and significant - image is of *individuals as rivers* that arrive and unite with the ocean. As we will see later, this image had a particular meaning for Hofmannsthal.

Rising in the ocean 'like bubbles' relates not only to this particular Upanishad. Beyond serving as an archetypal symbol, the ocean also resonates in the writings of Heraclitos and Schopenhauer. Both used the image of the individual as 'floating on a boat' over the ocean. Nietzsche, too, adopts this image from Heraclitos and Schopenhauer in his *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft.* He, however, transforms this image into its opposite, pointing at the will and the *courage needed to join with the current*.[29]

Being immersed in the ocean is a symbol of immersion in the subconscious, the unknown, the all-engulfing stream over which there is no control, the one that absorbs it all. 'Rising like bubbles' is, in a way, both a symbol of union and of *rising within*. However, these 'bubbles' do *not* rise to the surface. Rather, if we turn back to Hofmannsthal's own 1925 description of Elektra's death – 'her life bursts from within as water that becomes ice in a clay jar'.

The Ocean in Hindu Literature and *fin-de-siècle* Europe

The ocean appears in some of the Upanishads as the image of Brahman, 'the One,' which is both the source and the end of all living things. The importance that Deussen gave to

[28] There is hardly any doubt that Deussen's detailed and meticulous analysis of the Vedic text bears repercussions of the personal significance that these texts have acquired to his perception of both his national and personal Self.
[29] Paragraph 343 at the beginning of the Fifth Book

this particular image is evident in the meticulous cross-references he offers for it in this Upanishad. The impact that the image of the ocean – and especially in the way it appears in this particular Upanishad – on Hofmannsthal, is obviously great, since he does not only use it, in isolation, but in fact incorporated additional images from the same Upanishad in Elektra's last monologue. Beyond the obvious imagery of the *ozean,* he uses similar *sounding* images. For example, the 'manifold' imagery that repeats several times in Deussen's translation ('Vierundzwanzigfach,' 'dreifach,' 'fünffach,' 'tausendfach,') reappears in Elektra's monologue as 'der zwanzigfache Ozean';

Another part of the imagery in this scene might be the result of Hofmannsthal's deep acquaintance with the classics. The Upanishad's 'unending supply of food and drink' echos the Greek custom of libations to the dead, a recurring motif in Greek tragedy (not to mention Euripides' *The Libation Bearers,* which tells the same Elektra story, predating Sophocles); the appearance of 'Väters' in the same sentence reveals Elektra's connection to her own dead father, and finally – Oceanos is, in Greek mythology, Elektra's father.

Hofmannsthal majored in the Classics and in 1899, at the age of 25 received a doctorate in Romance Philology. His acquaintance with Greek mythology, then, was not through Nietzsche, but first hand. His own allusions to the connection between dance and a deep spiritual vitality are, therefore, both influenced by Nietzsche and informed from first hand reading. His breath of knowledge can be seen in the following "sketch", written, on December 17, 1893:

> Landstraße des Lebens
>
> verschiedengestaltete Bäume reden lassen
>
> Kerze ausblasen = den flirrenden Schleier der Maja wegwerfwn und ins dunkle wesenlose Meer tauchen
>
> großer Mensch – großer Baum, in dessen Schatten wir ausruhen
>
> auf seine eigene Seele hinabschauen wie auf den geheimnisvollen unerreichbaren Grund wines tiefen durchsichtigen Sees: hinuntertauchen. Lebensluft verlassen
>
> Der tragische Grundmythos: die in Individuen zerstückelte Welt sehnt sich nach Einheit, Dionysos Zagreus will wiedergeboren werden.
>
> Zustand: als wären meine Pulse geöffnet und leise ränne mein Blut mit dem Leben hinaus und mischte sich mit dem Blut der Wiesen, der Bäume, der Bäche.
>
> Country-road of life
>
> trees of various forms relinquish speech
>
> Candles are blown off = the glittering veil of Maja is thrown away and dives into a dark ethereal sea
>
> a great man – a great tree, in whose shadow we rest
>
> looking down at their very soul like on the secretive, unattainable bottom of a deep transparent sea: to dive in. Letting go of life's breath.
>
> The tragic fundamental mythos: that in the individual shredded world that yearns for unity, Dionysos Zagreus will be reborn.
>
> Situation: as if my wrist would be cut open, letting my blood with the life run out and mix with the blood of the meadows, the trees, the rivers.

These notes, perhaps sketches for a poem, show an image that was prevalent throughout the fin-de-siècle: the actual merging of the individual person into water – be it a river, a sea or an ocean. Immersion in water is, of course, a major component of most religions; it has a central role in most mythologies, and obviously – it occupies a central position in

art. However, as a subject separate from a specific story or ritual, presenting rather an image standing by itself, it appears around this time, the most famous example of which is Gustav Klimt *Fischblut* (1898). The poetic imagery in the scene of Elektra's 'dissolution of self' through dancing is, therefore, a result of a combination of Nietzschean thoughts and their ramification into Greek, classical literature, mythology and drama. However, her dissolution into *water* is a combination not only of a vast array of mythological stories, but specifically and particularly of an Indian, Vedic description in which the Individual returns to Brahman, going through a Hindu life cycle from its beginning in Brahman and through its –re-immersion in its vast waters.

Gilliam does point out the importance of the opera's last scene and hints at its influence on future works:[30] 'Imagery of death and sexuality is a theme dating back to ancient times, but in *Elektra* the firmly established dialectic of *eros* and *thanatos* assumes a new context in the Freudian world of Vienna c. 1900.' How true, only that *Elektra* was written *before* Freud came up with the concept of Thanatos. The influence of arts on science and philosophy may have played here a part.

While Hofmannsthal was aware and influenced by Classical philosophy and literature, Oriental philosophy and the great 19th century thinkers Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, the knowledge and world of extra-musical associations of Richard Strauss was less meticulously researched. In a relatively new book, Charles Youmans presents the composer's cultural background, and unsurprisingly traces it back to very sources very similar to those of Hofmannsthal: Goethe, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. [31]

Richard Strauss and The Ocean in *Elektra*

Unlike Hofmannsthal's Elektra who, according to its author 'renounces herself' to the 'oceanic feeling' – echoing the complex variety of cultural influences described above – a kind of communion with the general stream of existence, Strauss's Elektra seems to stand her ground against precisely the same force, struggling for her own, individual expression. This struggle is expressed in the clashes created by multi-metric and multi-tonal layers, and in the harmonic twists and turns of the score.

The music of Elektra's last dance starts at rehearsal number 230a (Fig. 1). Obviously, the musical expression of the physical effort that characterizes dance is apparent in the 6/4 meter and the upward melodic motion of the triplets. However, it is the harmony that gives the section its particular expressive power, creating a web of harmonic ambiguities that strive upwards and alternately (and sometimes simultaneously!) are crushed down, as if by a compressing weight.

The ostensible banality of the section's beginning can be misleading. The French writer Romain Rolland, whose relationship with Strauss developed particularly during the composition of *Salome*, wrote to a friend:

> … I am in the process of reading the score of *Elektra*, by Richard Strauss, which has just been performed in Dresden. The materials are, as usual, rather (or very) vulgar; but one is swept along by the torrent. … That legend of the Atridae is in any case unfailingly moving… Strauss himself has been caught by it, (in spite of his nonchalance and Bavarian bantering which I, who know him well, come across endlessly in his ambling phrases and his eternal waltz rhythms, which he trails about everywhere … it's a very odd thing to see these German waltz rhythms transformed in his hands, and gradually translating with frenzied passion the transports of Elektra and Clytmenestra).

[30] Gilliam, 42

[31] Youman, 2005, part 1.

> Joking apart, never has Strauss gone more deeply into the painting of the depths of the soul, of suffering (Letter to Paul Dupin, February 13, 1909).[32]

The section starts in E Major, (which Gilliam correlates with "ecstatic dance" in *Elektra*) in what Rolland probably referred to as 'ambling phrases' and 'eternal waltz rhythms' (230a). After a symmetrical four-bar start the music progresses conventionally to the III degree, G# minor, from which a further move to A major, the subdominant, or to B major, the dominant, might be expected. In spite of its conventionality this simple move already conceals the semiotic complexity of the following harmonic development. Strauss takes advantage of the *modal* kinetic potential inherent in harmonic progressions, contrasting the *downward gestural* quality of the minor and the inherently *upward gesture* of major, with the bass motion of the tonal degrees: The bass *rises* from I to III, but the *mode* of the chords, of course, gives a *downward* impression, from major to minor. Here this is particularly effective, since it is coupled with the melodic motion of the violins that is echoed by the bass (bar 5 after 230a) that falls short, in the third beat, from reaching the g#, just touching the f# below it and then falling, chromatically, to the d# in the next bar. The alleged ascending harmonic bass motion is weighed down by the modal quality of the degree. This ambiguity is further reinforced by the unexpected motion of the bass *down* a half-step to G, while the harmonic message leads *upward* to G Major, allowing B, the common third of G# minor and G Major, to transform its harmonic hues (231a) from the 'down' minor to the 'upward' major. This ambiguity game between the harmonic degrees of I and III takes place again, this time between G and B minor (5 bars after 231a), although here Strauss chooses, eventually, to return to the G major (232a): here, however, the *ascending* principle is more prominent, since the bass line goes up, B-C#-D-E-F-F# (one bar before 232a), while keeping Elektra's 'dancing' rhythmic pattern, to G, while the vocal line skips up a sixth from b1 to g2, and the harmony reaching G^{9}_{7}, creating a complete and total *opening* of a dominant-seventh chord that requires a resolution *upward* to an alleged tonic C Major (the Major mode is hinted by the A natural which forms the Major 9^{th} of the G chord). The two melodic lines lead to C: the violins point *up* from the B, while the vocal line leads *downwards* to C, but none of them reaches it. This is the first Dominant-seventh chord in a while (the former appeared only at r.n.227a, - about 40 bars earlier!), creating a considerable harmonic tension toward C major (the three bars starting at 232a). However, it is only the *pitch* of C that arrives (bar 4 after 232a), highlighted, in the vocal line, by a two bars break delay, an unexpected Ninth skip to c1 (while the expected vocal line would simply move from d2 to c2), and only then an octave skip to c2. Further, both C's are rhythmically 'off', the first acting as syncopation and the second as upbeat that leads down into a dense, heavy appoggiatura on Gb major, which reveals itself to be a Neapolitan to F minor (two bars before 233a). The key signature of E major, in some of the instruments, is cancelled, but no C major is heard. What we have is the *pitch* of C, as a bass organ point, instead of the expected root of a much-yearned after tonality, functioning as a rather uncertain, 'hovering' second inversion of F minor, a chord that will stay for several bars as Elektra sings that "the Ocean, the monstrous / the twenty-fold ocean buries / every limb of mine under its weight, I can not / lift myself!" (233a throughout till five bars after 234a). The *downward* pull of the Neapolitan motion, in contradiction to the expected upward motion to a C Major, pushes Elektra down to the F minor, with all its modal minor weight, literally preventing her from rising to her feet. This effect is particularly strong when we look at the strings. When condensed on a grand staff, the 'weight' of the chord is almost

[32] Rolland, 159

tangible: the density of the sound literally weighing down the voice line, that seems to struggle from within it (starting from two bars before 233a).

However, the open score reveals another picture (Fig. 2). The basses, consisting of bassoons, contrabassoons, tuba and double basses, dovetail the top melody not only as a counterpoint but, in fact, the harmony is also dovetailing, while the strings, in the middle, are constantly on F minor. The strings are divided to eight different parts: three parts of violins, three parts of violas and two of violoncellos (the double basses join the melody of the winds bass group). Each one of the parts includes three types of melodic motion: an oscillating second (either major or minor), an ascending part of a scale and a descending F minor arpeggio. These three types can either overlap (creating parallel motion) or not. All the notes between F and f# are used, except for the pitch-classes of A natural and B natural: this means that Strauss freely interchanges the major and minor options of the ^2, ^6 and ^7 degrees of F minor (i.e. he applies all five possible modes of F minor (Natural, Dorian, Phrygian, Harmonic and Melodic), thus creating various color shades of the minor tonality. The effect of this musical programmatic description of the Ocean is very similar to Wagner's opening of *Das Rheingold*, although harmonically it is more sophisticated, bringing to mind Debussy's *La Mer* (written only four years before *Elektra*).

As if listening to an Escher painting, the strings can be perceived in two ways, foreground and background interchanging, either as a harmonic bloc in motion or as a shimmering texture of weaving musical lines. When following the horizontal discourse of each line, we can hear an almost impressionistic, programmatic description of 'waves,' either small oscillating ones or large and soaring. Their intercalation creates a texture that is both static, since the same harmonic is kept throughout, and/or kinetic, since the motion of each part is clearly perceived (Fig. 3).

On the other hand there is, at the center of this texture, a dense 'sound block' around the middle C, consisting of G-Ab-Bb-C-Db. This pitch-cluster is created by the recurrent crossing of the strings' melodic lines, and is surrounded by ascending melodic waves from below, and piercing waves in F minor chords from above. This sound-block acts as a dense, 'black-hole' gravitation center, into which the ascending "streams" of the bass can be heard quite clearly, as well as the soaring skips that rise and swallowed back into it, in descending arpeggios of F minor. The impression is of a motionless density that absorbs into its center all motion around.

The Ocean as a Complex Cultural Unit: Strauss, Freud, Rolland.

Years after the creation of both *Elektra* works, the play and the opera, this 'oceanic' imagery re-appears in the correspondence of Romain Rolland with Sigmund Freud, albeit with no reference whatsoever to either Hofmannsthal or Strauss. Rolland, who was well acquainted with Indian philosophy and religion, used this image when describing to Freud the essence of his religious experience (letter from December 5, 1927, in reaction to Freud's *The Future of an Illusion* published in the same year). Freud quotes this letter in his introduction to his *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), where he expands the "oceanic feeling" image into the concept that developed from its core idea in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1922) into his concept of an instinct of self-destruction that acts psychologically versus the Eros life instinct. This instinct, inspired by Rolland's experience of immersing into an endless 'oceanic feeling,' became Freud's *Thanatos principle* of death. Such a coincidental parallelism of ideas is astounding, but the

possibility that Hofmannsthal's Vedic inspiration did, in fact, arrive to Rolland is not so far fetched, as can be seen from Rolland's quote above.

The première of Hofmannsthal's *Elektra* took place in Berlin in October of 1903, one year after the private début of Wilde's *Salomé*, and in the same venue: Max Reinhardt's Kleine Theater. Just like Strauss's *Salome* followed Wilde's 1902 production, so did his *Elektra* follow Hofmanssthal's play. In the opera's première in 1909, the similarities between the *Salome* and *Elektra* were apparent: both works feature a powerful female protagonist, whose personality is clearly rooted in the cultural context of the *fin-de-siècle femme fatale*.[33] Both women are obsessed by an *idée-fixe* rooted in sexual neurosis (with *Salome* being more obviously so, and Elektra's more of a Freudian character) and both culminate with a dance that is followed by the main character's death. Although Gilliam called Salome's dance an 'essentially erotic diversion,' referring to its dramatic function within the opera's plot, both dances are ecstatic, motion and music stemming from the depth of the dancer's psychological condition. However, while Wilde's *Salomé* was probably intended as a *pièce-de-scandale*, and its story based on a laconic and rather vague apocryphal description, Hofmannsthal's *Elektra* was not only the youngest heir of a complex literary and dramatic dynasty, but also carried strong repercussions of contemporary Freudian analyses. It is significant to note, though, that both story lines happen in a pre-Christian past, in quasi-mythological circumstances, and in places that are classified, by European standards of 1900, as *exotic.* Both works, then, echo at least a century's European fascination with non-Christian religious mysticism.

The number of interpretations and analyses of Hofmannsthal's *Elektra* is overwhelming. The rich information about his background, writings, and correspondence is difficult to resist. This essay makes an inquiry into the sources and ways in which the separate units of dance, ecstasy, death-yearning and dissolution-of-Self, as well as different perceptions of human existence, life and death, are combined into one complex cultural unit into an opera that becomes a meeting point of several cultural, philosophical and religious traditions, each one bearing its own stylistic musical correlations, and all of them creating a new amalgam that, in its turn, will influence musical and art works in the future. These roots intermingle and interlace, sometimes branching beyond Europe quotes an context; they create a complex and fascinating cultural kaleidoscope of various elements that, although diverse and sometimes incongruous and even contradictory, are by no means divorced from each other: myth, nationalism, orientalism, sexuality, wordlessness. Didn't Hofmannsthal himself describe the overwhelming cultural wealth in which he lived as a 'komplexe, wortlose Lehre'?[34]

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[33] Gilliam, 19.
[34] Zelinsky, 144

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