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Hofmannsthal's *Arabella*: Nineteenth-Century Slavonia as a Utopian *Chronotopos* of an Ideal Future Society

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This article[1] will examine Hugo von Hofmannsthal's utopian project for post-Habsburg Central Europe and post–World War I Europe as depicted in his last work, the lyrical comedy *Arabella* (1929).[2] In *Arabella*, Hofmannsthal's cultural and educational program for a better Europe and for intercultural understanding between Western and Southeastern Europe has been brought to maturation and unified through the artistic realization of his theatrical poetics aimed at educating the audience. Therefore, before I turn to a close analysis of the piece, I will offer a brief overview of Hofmannsthal's cultural and political views on the role of Austria in post–World War I Europe and on the political and educational role of the theater.

Jacques Le Rider claims that after the shock of 1914 Hofmannsthal became aware of the symbolic historical and geographical meaning of the Habsburg Monarchy and revealed his position on this issue in his *Reden und Aufsätze* of 1917. For Hofmannsthal, the Monarchy was the heir of the Holy Roman Empire and thus not only Germanic but also Roman through its links with Italy. The Monarchy occupied Central Europe, making it both a bulwark against Russia[3] and a bridge between the East and the West (121–22). Even more significant in *Arabella*, however, is Hofmannsthal's view of Austria as an idea that once brought about reconciliation between Germanic and Slavic populations and must do so again:

> Diese primäre und schicksalhafte Anlage auf Ausgleich mit dem Osten, sagen wir es präzise: auf Ausgleich der alteuropäischen lateinisch-germanischen mit der neu-europäischen Slawenwelt, diese einzige Aufgabe und raison d'être Österreichs mußte für das europäische Bewußtsein eine Art von Verdunkelung erfahren, während der Dezennien 1848–1914. [...]
>
> Stärker als das Engparteiliche und das Ideologische [...] ist das Schicksalhafte, welches bei uns darauf geht, in deutschem Wesen Europäisches zusammenzufassen und dieses nicht mehr scharf-nationale Deutsche mit slawischem Wesen zum Ausgleich zu bringen. (Hofmannsthal, "Die österreichische Idee" 107)

The reconciliation between the Germanic and Slavic "essences" will result in a higher synthesis at the end of *Arabella*.

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Martin Stern points to Hofmannsthal's historical publications of 1914–17 which reveal that the increasing threats to the Monarchy's existence made Hofmannsthal deeply aware of his Austrian identity and his love for Austria (255). Katherine Arens, meanwhile, contends that in his essay "Wir Österreicher und Deutschland" (1915) Hofmannsthal envisions Austria as especially European and as the Continent's defense against the Turks (185). According to Hofmannsthal, Austria's liminal position between the West and the two types of East—Russia and the Orient—presupposes a specific cultural role for the country. Both Le Rider (122) and Arens (187) point to the same passage in Hofmannsthal's essay "Die österreichische Idee" (1917) in which he elaborates on the cultural role of Austria vis-à-vis Germany: "Dieses Europa, das sich neu formen will, bedarf eines Österreichs: [...] es bedarf seiner, um den polymorphen Osten zu fassen" (108). As early as 1917, then, Hofmannsthal was aware of the necessity to integrate the "polymorphous East," i.e., the culturally mixed margin of Southeastern Europe, into the new Europe and to conceive of Austria not as a fortress defending Europe from Asia but as a bridge towards Asia. The "polymorphous East" assumes its fictional counterpart in the Slavonia of *Arabella.*

After the end of the First World War, Hofmannsthal began a new activity, namely, attending conferences with the aim of spreading "den Europagedanken" (Stern 259). At a conference devoted to the topic "Die Rolle des geistigen Menschen beim Aufbau Europas" in 1926, Hofmannsthal expressed his opinion that Austria might indeed be especially entitled to take the initiative for a new Europe since it was the only country truly destroyed in the war (260): "[...] und niemand wird in seiner Sorge um Europa aufrichtiger sein als der, dem Europa ein verlorengegangenes großes Vaterland ersetzen muß" ("Ansprache" 339). To questions posed in an opinion poll by the *Frankfurter Zeitung* as to whether the creation of a United States of Europe was necessary and possible, Hofmannsthal responded: "Neue, übernationale Zusammenhänge herzustellen und die politische Form für sie zu finden, halte ich für das eine Notwendige. Das Notwendige ist immer möglich" (["Paneuropa"] 508).

Based on such assertions, we can assume that in Hofmannsthal's view the model for a United States of Europe was based on an Austrian nation that Arens describes as "a psychological and anthropological community" (199). In his vision of the new nation, Hofmannsthal aspired towards an improvement of the whole based on a form of historical conservation that dismissed elitist concepts of *Bildung* but supported the value of *Bildung* itself. Hofmannsthal refused to consider the Enlightenment a finished process from the nationalist era and advocated instead for a modern Europe—starting with the Enlightenment—as an unfulfilled project (Arens 199–200).

For Hofmannsthal, theater plays an important role in the process of enlightenment and in the concept of *allgemeine Bildung*. In his 1911 essay "Das Spiel vor der Menge," written on the occasion of *Jedermann*'s performance, he

proposes a broad public resonance of the theater performance and emphasizes the inherently political function of the theater:

> Gibt man sich mit dem Theater ab, es bleibt immer ein Politikum. Man handelt, indem man vor eine Menge tritt, denn man will auf sie wirken. [...] Dramatische Gebilde dieser großen, simplen Art sind wahrhaftig aus dem Volk hervorgestiegen. Vor wen sollten sie, als wiederum vor das Volk? [...] Das Wohltuende für den Dichter liegt darin, unsäglich gebrochenen Zuständen ein ungebrochenes Weltverhältnis gegenüberzustellen, das doch in der innersten Wesenheit mit jenem identisch ist. (62–64)

We shall see in *Arabella* how Hofmannsthal's theoretical proposals for a comprehensive education that would create better "Austrians" and "Europeans" in the spirit of the Enlightenment, the Renaissance, and humanism—and thereby reestablish an unbroken relationship to the world—are applied "in practice," i.e., onstage.

The "foreign," or non-Austro-German, character in *Arabella* is the rich Slavonian count and estate owner Mandryka.[4] Croatia claims a "royal" medieval past and an influential noble class. After the liberation of Slavonia from the Ottomans in the late seventeenth century, Slavonian society, on account of 150 years of Ottoman rule, lacked a sizeable middle and lower nobility and had only a few dozen large-estate owners, with many serfs stripped of all rights (Goldstein 48). I will demonstrate later that Hofmannsthal uses this historical background to create a stereotype fulfilling a certain function in the play.

András Váry has analyzed the creation of stereotypes in the statistics and ethnographic works of the Habsburg Monarchy from the 1790s to the 1830s and claims that their aims were not the homogenization of culture and the exclusion of the "Other" from the public sphere. Rather, these ethnic stereotypes aspired to attributes that all people, although culturally different, should have (39). Váry explains that these attributes were conducive to the realization of a new, civil society and that, although they characterized communities as "fit" or "unfit" to participate in the construction of civil society, the ethnic stereotypes had no nationalist tendencies in the first decades of the nineteenth century (39–40). Although ethnic groups were evaluated differently as to whether they met the standards of civil society, the door was open for them provided they "improved" themselves and followed the educational principles of the new society (51). A century later, Hofmannsthal seems to follow this pattern in order to create a society onstage that had never been consistently created in reality.

Mandryka is not marked by his national but rather by his regional Slavonian identity. He learns, develops, and repents in the course of the play, all of which enables him to change and "become" better. His teacher is the Viennese Arabella, who also learns and changes under Mandryka's influence. I will argue that the play is not merely an idealization of the "glory days of the Monarchy" but

represents a utopia based on changing through give and take; understanding the relativity of "selfhood" and the "Other"; a political message about organic unity between the margin, represented here by Slavonia, and the metropolis Vienna; and a humanistic ideology of intercultural communication.

Hofmannsthal has constructed a seemingly naive, melodramatic plot which can mislead the reader. The plot, however, simply constitutes an elegant veil for a deeper poetic and ideological message.[5] Claudio Magris interprets the play merely as a conglomeration of music, agitated emotions, and a longing for love. He claims that social reality has no value in this lyrical comedy because it has been reduced to nothing more than musical background decorated by emotional games (227).[6] In contrast to Magris, Gerhard H. Weiß bases his analysis on the premise that Hofmannsthal consciously sets the work in a concrete socio-historical space in order to give not only a plausible and discernible but also a charming and sympathetic critique of this society. Weiß claims that for Hofmannsthal tradition is no less important than the realization that the old Austrian society had already become anachronistic in the days of the Habsburg Monarchy (22). Weiß further argues that Hofmannsthal's retrospective view of the Monarchy is used ironically and he makes several points about the structure of the plot with which I agree—but I will demonstrate that irony is only one aspect of the play used as a means to another end.

Weiß points to the time of the dramatic action, 1860, and concludes that, although this period was a seemingly happy time for Austria, the inner substance of the Monarchy was already hollow (23). Moreover, 1860 is the year after the battle at Solferino in which Austria lost most of its Italian territories and began the difficult and eventually unsuccessful process of negotiating with the nationalities and redefining the state. Weiß argues that the complicated political reality leading up to the 1867 Compromise and the following decades appears at odds with the jovial atmosphere of the Empire: "Es ist die Zeit, wo Schein über Sein gewinnt, wo die Gesellschaft zum letzten großen Walzertanz antritt" (23). According to Weiß, Hofmannsthal uses irony to criticize this "Scheinwelt," and the only characters who refuse to play the fake social roles are Arabella and Mandryka. Accordingly, they are to be looked upon as saviors from an inauthentic society (25).

The interplay between "Schein" and "Sein," a recurring motif in Hofmannsthal's work, is indeed present in this play; however, it is more complex and ambiguous than the discrepancies Weiß points out. I call this dynamic a "double structure" and will argue that it has been implemented consistently in terms of plot, characters, language, and dramaturgy to achieve a specific ideological goal.

The climax of the play occurs during the last night of the carnival of which Arabella is the queen. Carnival is all about masks and roles, as opposed to "authentic" reality. Pointing to the clear limitations of the Austrian situation, Arabella's sister, Zdenka, continues to wear a mask outside of the carnival frame: she pretends to be a boy because the impoverished family cannot afford to marry

off both daughters. Arabella's family used to belong to the high nobility, but their financial condition has reduced them to simply playing the role of nobility. This is indeed a "Scheinwelt" which can justifiably be interpreted as an aesthetic analog of the Monarchy, which would itself become "double" six years after the fictional time of this play.

The double structure and its function in the dramaturgy of the play—as well as in the relationship between Arabella and Mandryka and their position in society—deserve closer attention. When, at the beginning of the play, the fortune-teller prophesies ill fate for Arabella's wedding prospects because of her sister's interfering in Arabella's love affairs (*Arabella* 518), we have a dramatic structure based on a double negative. The prophesy is neither an alienation effect in Brecht's sense, which would inform the audience of the ultimate outcome and thus eliminate the suspense, nor is it a prophecy of the ancient Greek tragic type, which has to be fulfilled in the end. This is why Arabella's mother, Adelaide, cries out in despair at the peak of the misunderstanding: "Oh wäre dieser Abend nie gewesen! Das hat keine Prophetin uns vorausgesagt!" (574). Hofmannsthal clearly uses traditional genre expectations to acknowledge that traditional solutions are not necessarily adequate to the situation.

In fact, here Hofmannsthal modifies the tradition of the medieval *theatrum mundi* in which people play their roles before God, who is merely a spectator. The fortune-teller gives only the frame for the unfolding of the love story and leaves it up to the characters to play their roles to the best of their ability.[7] As Rudolf Schäfer tells us, the fortune-teller is a double character, representing both the "Historisch-Zeitliches" and something "Überwirkliches und Überzeitliches" (145–46), hence the only character who remains at a distance from the society in the play and sees things others cannot. The fortune-teller is assigned the position of an impartial spectator and judge of roles, a task traditionally reserved for God. Her influence thus goes beyond the fictive frame of the play and guides the recipients into developing a double vision, one historically embedded in the context of the Habsburg Monarchy and in the fictional frame, the other "überzeitlich," rendering the fictional frame relative and transforming the recipients into active protagonists beyond the fiction. In their actions in extra-textual reality, they should learn from the actions of the fictional characters in *Arabella*. The frame given by the fortune-teller is, then, a post-Enlightenment version of the religious metaphor of *theatrum mundi*, presenting in *Arabella* an abstract, ahistorical model of universal educational value.

The frame provided by the fortune-teller is more likely to develop into a tragedy than a comedy. And yet, the genre of the play is *lyrische Komödie*—a reversal that would indeed be appropriate to the carnival season, or to Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque, which entails such reversals. Indeed, this comedy of errors could easily turn into tragedy by the end of the third act when it seems impossible to overcome the misunderstanding and Arabella's father, Count

Waldner, challenges Mandryka to a duel to save his daughter's honor (569). As Weiß remarks, Count Waldner cannot save the honor of his family in a manner befitting his social standing because he previously sold his pistols to pay off his debts (24). This critical dramatic moment thus turns into its own parody.

The true tragedy, however, is still possible at this moment in the drama. Although the duel cannot take place, Mandryka is not convinced of Arabella's innocence; the mere fact that he doubts her makes her a tragic heroine of a new sort, a victim of Desdemona's type, but without bloodshed. In his classification of the bourgeois tragic genre, Walter Benjamin elaborates on the function of the intriguer, which the German *Trauerspiel* inherited from the *Staatsaktion,*[8] and claims that the comic enters the realm of tragedy through this character who bears a tragic potential (106).

It is not difficult to argue that Hofmannsthal consciously implements the tragic potential of the comedy embodied in the figure of the intriguer in order to tie together the double structure of the plot and the dramaturgy to make his point. The figure of the intriguer in *Arabella* is not an animate character; it is actually the city of Vienna and the values the characters have learned from it. At the moment when it seems that Arabella and Mandryka's romance will turn into a disaster, Adelaide cries in despair: "Oh Wien, du Stadt der médisance und der Intrige!" (566).[9] At such moments, the characters not only act in a double manner by playing different roles; their language is doubled as well. The "doubleness" of the characters' language is not applied in order to disguise but rather to reveal the inauthenticity of their actions.

Thus the double structure of the dramaturgy, the plot, the characters' actions, and their language fulfills, first and foremost, the function of revealing the inauthenticity of the world presented onstage—turning it upside down as the carnival season requires—to a deeper ideological end. Moreover, although the world of the old Monarchy is mocked and parodied on account of its inauthenticity, mocking and parody are not aims in themselves. The ultimate goal of the play seems more aimed at being educational and lying beyond parody. The lyrical comedy can be saved from a tragic outcome only through the characters' endeavors to overcome inauthenticity, to come back to their "true selves," to move away from disingenuous communication and abandon limiting traditions that force a daughter into men's clothes and a son-in-law to challenge his father-in-law to a duel. After all, the characters' freedom to act arises from the open frame created by the fortune-teller at the beginning of the play. Adelaide's relieved outcry, "Oh, Theodor, Welch eine Wendung!" (575), subsequent to overcoming the misunderstanding, should therefore be interpreted as dramatic irony.[10]

Adelaide assumes that the "Wendung"—which is also a technical term used in drama theory and therefore also a pun, i.e., double language—is due solely to Zdenka's decision to reveal her female identity and to tell everyone that she, and not Arabella, gave Matteo the key to Arabella's bedroom. This solution indeed

functions according to the external logic of the plot. In the deeper plot structure, however, it is the process of Arabella's, Mandryka's, and Zdenka's recognition of the other and of themselves that brings the change, which is not a sudden "Wendung" but the result of a process.

Hofmannsthal's ingenuity in these juxtapositions consists in his method of directing dramatic irony also towards the audience, which can thus be misled to interpret the play either on the basis of the melodramatic plot structure as an aesthetic escapade from grim reality (Magris) or on the basis of doubling as an aesthetic-intellectual mockery of reality (Weiß). The play, however, gives numerous signals to the audience on how to avoid the interpretive trap of dramatic irony (or falling back on traditional readings) and warns the audience of the unreliability of sensual perception. Mandryka's furious words of suspense and disbelief regarding Arabella's morality are simultaneously an appeal to the audience:

> MANDRYKA *vor sich.* Und wenn hier viele Arabella heißen—
> meine gottverdammten Jägerohren
> foppen meinen dummen harten Schädel—
> daß ich als ein Narr dasteh vor einem Fremden? [...]
> Noch ist nicht einmal vorbei die Stunde
> die ich grad ihr freigegeben habe—
> also bin ich schon ein Narr und Esel? (556–57)

> MANDRYKA. Ich müßte blind sein, und hab' leider scharfe Augen,
> ich müßte taub sein, und habe leider gute Ohren,
> und müßte schwach im Kopf sein—dann vielleicht,
> daß ich das Individuum dort nicht erkennen täte
> und nicht verstünde, was hier für ein Spiel gespielt wird bei der Nacht! (567)

In the beginning, Arabella and Mandryka are infatuated with each other entirely on the basis of image and appearance. Arabella wishes that the roses she received from one of her many admirers were "von einem fremden Reisenden" whom she had only seen once before (522). She becomes obsessed with thoughts about the stranger, telling Zdenka: "da war ein fremder Mensch heut vormittag," "ein Fremder halt, aus Ungarn oder aus der Wallachei" (525), and soon feels so closely related to him that she calls him "mein Fremder!" (529). She does not really know or care exactly whence the stranger comes. Moreover, it seems that she does not even know exactly where "Ungarn oder die Wallachei" are. Mandryka is defined as "fremd" because he does not belong geographically and culturally to Vienna, and therein lies his appeal to Arabella.

Mandryka, on the other hand, is so enchanted by the picture of Arabella her father sent him that he asks Count Waldner for his daughter's hand in the exalted style of a bygone age and in the manner of an old autocrat:

MANDRYKA. Mein sind die Wälder, meine sind die Dörfer,
Viertausend Untertanen beten, daß ich glücklich sei—
und ich, mit aufgehobenen Händen bitte ich:
Herr Vater, geben mir die gnädige Tochter,
geben mir sie zur Frau, die jetzt seit vierzehn Wochen
jeden Gedanken hier in dieser Brust regiert. (536)

Mandryka's lines embody the stereotype of a rich Slavonian feudal estate owner with thousands of serfs at his disposal. The stereotype is completed and reinforced by Mandryka's self-description when he introduces himself to Arabella: "Verzeihen Sie, ich bin ein halber Bauer, bei mir geht alles langsam, aber stark" (545).

The direct and simple language Mandryka uses to describe himself stands in stark contrast to the artificial and sophisticated atmosphere of the Viennese ball where he and Arabella are having the conversation. In addition, he shows irrational generosity (and confirms the stereotype of a somewhat alien and overly rich foreigner who buys his way into society) by treating the guests of the ball to gallons of champagne and mountains of roses (551). The audience encounters a spontaneous, impulsive, generous, and childishly innocent character—a man from the rural margin of the Empire, so different from the well-tempered and controlled Viennese who "belong" at the ball.

Mandryka's characteristics appeal to Arabella in the beginning, but they will later prove to be almost destructive. Mandryka will have to cultivate his passions in the process of his "improvement" in accordance with Hofmannsthal's project for an ongoing enlightenment of the new nation.

The mutual appeal between Mandryka and Arabella arises from a feeling of the uncanny. The uncanny or, in the German original, *das Unheimliche*, is "jene Art des Schreckhaften, welche auf das Altbekannte, Längstvertraute zurückgeht" (Freud 101). Arabella explains to Zdenka why she cannot fall in love with Matteo: "Er ist der Richtige nicht für mich! Er ist kein ganzer Mann. Ich könnte mich halt vor ihm nicht fürchten. Wer das nicht ist, der hat bei mir verspielt!" (523). The implication is that she can fear Mandryka—"ein ganzer Mann" and not a pampered Viennese.

In the first conversation with Arabella, Mandryka still perceives her as a picture with an uncanny power over him:

MANDRYKA. [...] Ihr schönes Gesicht
Auch auf einem Papier verbrennt schon die Seele!
[...]
So schön sind Sie—eine Gewalt ist da in Ihren Zügen
sich einzudrücken in die Seele wie ein weiches Wachs!
Über den einfachen Menschen, den Felder und Wälder umgeben,
ist eine solche Gewalt sehr groß, und er wird wie ein Träumer,
wie ein besessener wird er und faßt den Entschluß mit der Seele,
einen ganzen Entschluß und wie er entschlossen ist, so muß er handeln!
Arabella erschrickt vor der dumpfen Heftigkeit, steht auf (545)

Arabella's beauty becomes irresistible through the "Gewalt" it emanates, or which Mandryka projects onto her. Finally, Arabella meets the man she can fear and Mandryka gladly succumbs to his obsession with Arabella's face, which paralyzes his reasoning.

From this primary mutual feeling of appealing fear (a traditional awe characterizing lovers), Arabella steers the conversation in a more rational direction, which should bring about disillusionment. She informs Mandryka about the condition of her family: "Wir sind nicht grad sehr viel, nach dem Maß dieser Welt—wir laufen halt so mit als etwas zweifelhafte Existenzen" (546). Mandryka, however, perceives the world differently than Arabella. He responds: "Ihren Stammbaum, Arabella, den tragen Sie in ihr Gesicht geschrieben!" (546). Instead of disillusioning Mandryka, then, Arabella becomes fascinated with Mandryka's "Weltanschauung":

> ARABELLA. So wie Sie sind, so habe ich keinen Menschen gesehn!
> Sie bringen Ihre eigene Lebensluft mit sich
> und was nicht Ihnen zugehört, das ist nicht da für Sie. (547)

The process of acknowledging "the Other" begins with the line above, and it is symptomatic that Arabella not only guides the process but also that her world does not completely dominate the process. At this point, mutual fascination and the lure of the uncanny still dominate the relationship between Arabella and Mandryka.

The relationship between the concepts of *heimlich* and *unheimlich* elaborated by Freud plays a key role in the progress of mutual recognition in *Arabella*:

> Wir werden überhaupt daran gemahnt, daß dies Wort heimlich nicht eindeutig ist, sondern zwei Vorstellungskreisen zugehört, die, ohne gegensätzlich zu sein, einander doch recht fremd sind, dem des Vertrauten, Behaglichen und dem des Versteckten, Verborgengehaltenen. Unheimlich sei nur als Gegensatz zur ersten Bedeutung, nicht auch zur zweiten gebräuchlich. (105–06)

> Also heimlich ist ein Wort, das seine Bedeutung nach einer Ambivalenz hin entwickelt, bis es endlich mit seinem Gegensatz unheimlich zusammenfällt. Unheimlich ist irgendwie eine Art von heimlich. (107)

The "Gewalt" behind Arabella's beauty and the impulsiveness behind Mandryka's "Lebensluft" combined with his innocent "Weltanschauung" are initially the appealing but subsequently destructive, uncanny forces that almost turn the comedy into tragedy. Mandryka's perception, which focuses on the immediate surroundings, and his impulsive nature prevent him from reasoning and grasping the broader context of the "Spiel" he suspects. As Arabella pointedly remarks: "was nicht [Mandryka] zugehört, das ist nicht da für [ihn]" (547). Therefore, it is natural that he is convinced of Arabella's deception because everything leads him to that conclusion.

Arabella, on the other hand, first acknowledges and admires Mandryka's emotional nature, but she fails to understand it at the critical moment in which his perception leads him to the false conclusion that she has deceived him. Only when Zdenka reveals her identity before everyone and the reasons why she gave the key to Matteo while pretending to be Arabella, does Arabella understand Zdenka, as well as herself and Mandryka, in new ways:

> ARABELLA. Zdenkerl, du bist die Bessere von uns zweien,
> du hast das liebevollere Herz, und nichts ist da für dich
> nichts in der Welt, als was dein Herz dich heißt zu tun. (573)

Here, Arabella's line is almost identical to the one she uses in the quote above to describe Mandryka. Both Zdenka and Mandryka "think" with their hearts and are not at home in the calculated and artificial world of Vienna where everyone plays double roles. Mandryka is the foreigner, "the *unheimlicher* Other" from outside, while Zdenka is redressed as the *un/heimliche* from within.[11] The revealing of Zdenka's physical disguise and her *heimliche physische Existenz* has more of a symbolic than a literal meaning. She, too, has to go through the process of acknowledging "the Other" in herself, i.e., the repressed woman she should "become," as Arabella encourages her to do in the beginning of the play:

> ARABELLA. Zdenkerl, in dir steckt was Gefährliches seit letzter Zeit.
> Mir scheint, Zeit wärs, daß du ein Mädel wirst
> vor aller Welt und daß die Maskerad ein End hat. (523)

Zdenka, Mandryka, and Arabella all have to go through a process of getting to know everyone else and themselves, to discover *das Unheimliche* in themselves and come to terms with it. Although Arabella is innocent of deceiving Mandryka, she too discovers her uncanny side when she compares herself to her sister and to Mandryka—what is *in* her need not be her. She has played the role of seductress for too long and has let her admirers cherish too many hopes because she was distant, rational, and unemotional. She understands by the end of the play what Zdenka told her at the beginning: "Ich will nicht eine Frau sein—so eine wie du bist. Stolz und coquett, und kalt dabei!" (523). She has been trained—costumed—as a *Salondame*, which she is not.

Arabella's rationality in confronting this duality, however, is both her weakness and her strength. What distinguishes her from Zdenka and Mandryka is her capacity to face reality from a distance as well as her language skills in conveying her thoughts and feelings to the others. She is thus equipped to be the guide in the process of enlightenment which all three characters undergo.

Arabella's leading role in the process of enlightenment unveils Hofmannsthal's ideological biases towards Western European values. An "enlightened" character is indeed the ultimate goal of this process and, as Arens insightfully remarks

regarding Hofmannsthal's cultural concept of the new nation, Hofmannsthal naively believes that Slavs can simply become German when "German" is understood as a specific form of European culture with Renaissance-humanist values (200). Thus the "Slavonian" ultimately has more changing to do than the "Viennese," and since these characters stand for respective cultural models, it means that Slavonian cultural identity needs to adjust more to the Austrian model.

Within the economy of the play, it is clear that Arabella and Mandryka need each other in order to become "better" people and complete individuals. However, Vienna cannot be the home for the "new," "improved" people. The topos Vienna in *Arabella* symbolizes moral decadence (the Waldners are financially ruined because of the father's gambling debts and hope that a rich relative will die and leave them money [519]); inauthenticity (the double structure of the society as mentioned on several occasions); claustrophobia and closeness (the Waldners live in a hotel); and, finally, intrigues (the attribute that adds femininity to the city).

Nina Berman has pointed out that Hofmannsthal depicted Oriental cities as "confusing, seductive, disorienting, and potentially deadly" (17). She also offers insight into Hofmannsthal's correspondence with Carl J. Burckhardt in which he describes Marrakesh as a "pure, eternal, ancient and childlike, innocently fresh world" (15). In my own interpretation of Hofmannsthal's short story "Reitergeschichte" (1898), I argue that the city of Milan, which the Habsburg troops enter after their victory over the Italian insurgents, is equated with a woman and that the occupation of the city is therefore equated with sexual dominance (192). In addition, the supposedly transparent Milan functions as an alibi which lures the main character into a dangerous nearby village where he dies (193–94).

Hofmannsthal's impression of Marrakesh, as described in his correspondence with Burckhardt, reveals additional details important for *Arabella*:

> Mein Lieber, ich werde von dieser Stadt mich schwerer trennen als von irgend einer Stadt in Europa. Schon vor Morgengrauen, [...], freute ich mich hier zu sein—und abends, beim Sonnenuntergang, auf meinem flachen Turmdach über dem riesigen menschenschwimmelnden Marktplatz, wenn der Schlangenbändiger, [...] zu mir heraufgrüßte und seine Zuhörer aufforderte, den erhabenen und weisen Fremdling zu bewundern, der ihm abermals ein fürstliches Geschenk habe zukommen lassen, und dabei die Fünffrancsnote mit einer prachtvollen Gebärde im Wind flattern ließ, und sie alle, Greise und Jünglinge, einen kurzen Augenblick mich freundlich applaudierten, war ich wieder froh, hier zu sein, in dieser reinen ewigen, uralten und kindlich frischen Welt. (183)

Hofmannsthal projects fairy-tale features onto the Orient and displays Western cultural superiority. In this, he certainly follows the nineteenth and early-twentieth-century patterns of Orientalist discourse, as Berman points out (16). But his economic superiority and generosity towards the locals are especially

intriguing because in *Arabella* they become features of both Mandryka Senior, who sprinkled tons of salt onto the streets of Verona so that a girl could ski in August (530), and Mandryka Junior, who treats the guests at the Viennese ball to gallons of champagne and mountains of roses (551). Yet another carnivalesque exchange of roles has taken place: the rich foreigners are now people from the southeastern margin of the empire and the poor Orient is now the Habsburg metropolis Vienna. Considering Hofmannsthal's dexterity in employing the double structure, we can safely assume that the role reversal is a message for the recipients to assume the role of "the Other" in order to understand their position.

In *Arabella*, Hofmannthal retains some of his earlier thematics but applies them differently. The dangerous, seductive, and feminine city is shifted from the Orient, or from the Western margins of the Habsburg Empire (Milan), to the center, Vienna, and the "pure, eternal, ancient and childlike, innocently fresh world" is shifted from Marrakesh to the southeastern margin of the Monarchy, Slavonia—a part of the Monarchy seeking an understanding from the center. In addition, the depiction of Slavonia in *Arabella* evokes associations of free, unlimited space and control ("Mein sind die Wälder, meine sind die Dörfer" [536]),[12] and conveys that control as innocent, using the strongest symbol of purity and innocence possible: the glass of fresh well water that the girls from Mandryka's villages bring to their fiancés as a token of mutual belonging (547).

The topos Slavonia is thus depicted in *Arabella* as a non-existent, utopian space. It is not even present "physically" as a *Schauplatz* within the plot of the play, but evoked only as an imaginary space through Mandryka's descriptions. These are so powerful that they conjure up Adelaide's childhood memories as an attempt to escape reality:

> ADELAIDE. O welche Zartheit, bezaubernde ländliche Sitte!
> Ich fühle die Luft meiner Heimat um mich, und das Schloß meiner Väter drunten schlummernd das Dorf— [...] (550)

Slavonia fulfills a similar function for the whole play. It is juxtaposed to dystopian Vienna and is the place where the project of enlightenment, which begins in the metropolis, can be applied in an ideal way, in harmony with nature and undisturbed by the vices of the big city. Schäfer describes the Slavonia in *Arabella* as a green paradise:

> In dieser Vorstellung des Abgeschlossenen und in sich Ruhenden, des Insularen, liegt etwas wie eine Erinnerung an einen hortus conclusus, an ein grünes Paradies. Die Teile, die sich als Kulturlandschaft darstellen, nehmen kraft der schützend eingehenden und bergenden Funktion des sie umgebenden Waldes, der seinen Schatten über sie wirft, selber etwas von dessen Unberührtheit an: die Grenzen zwischen Kultur- und Ur-Landschaft verschwimmen. (156)

Having in mind the "Asian" quality of the Slavonia in *Arabella*,[13] we should draw upon Hofmannsthal's notes on the relationship between Europe and Asia collected in his essay "Die Idee Europa" when reading this libretto. Hofmannsthal expresses his disappointment over the inner-European divisiveness of the time (the essay was published in 1916) and over the miscommunication between Western and Southeastern Europe—the latter to some extent part of Asia, yet inevitably related to Europe:

> Tragikomödie der europäischen Mandate,
> Abspaltung der Westmächte im Krimkrieg,
> Beginnende Unlust gegen dieses Europa in den vornehmlich sein Deliberationsobjekt bildenden Resten der antiken Welt: sog. "Orient"; Balkanländer; Europa. (374)

He then looks at Asia and perceives it as a "Paradies—das noch vorhandene, beginnliche unzeitliche, 'zeitlose.' [...] Menschlicher Verkehr an Stelle des maschinellen, Funktionellen. Die Schönheit der Dinge" (379–80).[14] Hofmannsthal regards the Asian "paradise" as spiritually and morally superior to Europe, a model from which Europe should learn:

> Diesem Asien, auf das es mit ergriffenem Blick hinstarrte, hat Europa symbolisch die Palme gereicht. Selbstbewußtsein dieses Asien. [...]
>
> Hören Sie die Verurteilung des europäischen Wesens, um so zermalmender als sie würdevoll und ohne Polemik ist. Hören Sie, wie Asia sich aufrichtet, seiner Einheit bewußt, [...]: Bewußt seines erhabenen inneren Erbes, jener Erstgeburt des religiösen Denkens [...]. (380)

The topos Slavonia in *Arabella* is thus a complex utopia which draws from the past but is directed towards the future. The depiction of Slavonia as a feudal and rural region evokes the 150 years of Ottoman rule in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, hence an Asian and/or Oriental presence, thus implying all the positive traits mentioned above that Hofmannsthal attributes to Asia. The cultivation of Mandryka evokes the subsequent project of enlightened reforms pursued by the Habsburg Monarchy in order to bring this region culturally closer to the other parts of Croatia that had been continually under Habsburg rule. At the same time, Hofmannsthal develops a project of reuniting former margins of the Monarchy with their former center, Vienna, through common cultural values which, to be sure, are negotiated and renegotiated in the process of coming together. Vienna and Slavonia need each other in the same way that Arabella and Mandryka need each other. Mandryka needs to cultivate his senses, and Arabella needs to regain authenticity in her emotions. This can only happen through an equal interaction of the two cultural modes symbolized by the geographical spaces and embodied in the two *dramatis personae*.

In the kind of test familiar from Mozart's *Zauberflöte*, Hofmannsthal has Arabella and Mandryka undergo a three-step process of illusion, disillusionment, and eventual maturation. In the process, they almost fall into the abyss between "Schein" and "Sein." The process involves acknowledging the external "Other" by acknowledging "the Other" in oneself. The obvious and probable should not be taken as such. Both reason and the senses are not enough to overcome the gap between "Schein" and "Sein." Mandryka correctly suspects that a "Spiel," a masquerade, has taken place, but his senses and reason cannot help him get to the bottom of things. The "Spiel" is not the one he suspects it to be. Likewise, the audience should not draw conclusions on the basis of the stagy nature and structure of the play. The audience must also engage in the process Arabella and Mandryka undergo.

At the end of *Arabella*, the concepts of *heimlich* and *unheimlich* prove synonymous. Hofmannsthal's twentieth-century view of the Enlightenment has the dimension of accepting the "Other" by facing "the Other" in oneself. The harmonious existence of the "Other" and the "self" can only succeed in the utopian space of a Slavonia offstage—not in Vienna where everyone and everything have to become part of the community, that is, where all must adjust to well-defined norms.

Arabella is a fictional counterpart to Hofmannsthal's program for "eine neue europäische Idee: neue Wirklichkeit. Nicht eine Utopie, nicht eine Konfoederation, nicht die permanente Konferenz, obwohl all dies kommen kann, —sondern ein neues europäisches Ich, ein geändertes Verhältnis des Ich zum Dasein, zum Geld" ("Die Idee Europa" 381–82). As Srđan Bogosavljević rightly concludes, Arabella and Mandryka are intended to marry for money, but marry for love (77), and both change and become better individuals. However, the reasons why the Slavic character is a Croat—and not a Czech or a Pole—are not merely political, that is to say, cannot be reduced to the Croats' loyalty to the Habsburg emperor and to Austria's search for a new sphere of interest in the Balkans after the Dual Compromise (73–74). Much to the contrary, Hofmannsthal understands the discontent of the Balkan peoples towards Western Europe, as we can see clearly in "Die Idee Europa" (374), and does not justify Western European politics towards the region. The Slavonian character, whose ethnicity is never mentioned, symbolizes regional identity—as opposed to a national one—as well as the bridge between Western and Southeastern Europe, the latter perceived and depicted by Hofmannsthal not only as Slavic but also slightly Oriental and Asian.

Arabella is therefore a utopian model for communication not only among the "Deutsche und Slawen und Lateiner" ("Die Idee Europa" 383), i.e., the peoples of the former Habsburg Monarchy, but also a model for a new Austria—an Austria that would not be a bulwark against the Turks but a bridge to the Orient—and a new Europe that would not be defined in binary opposition to Asia. There is

no place for the traditional national or political paradigm in this utopian project because that traditional paradigm is an exclusive concept strictly defined ethnically and linguistically and thus in direct opposition to Hofmannsthal's culturally comprehensive approach.

Notes

1. This article substantially extends an argument I made in my dissertation, "*Fin de siècle* Balkans" 177–97.

2. The text discussed in this article is the lyrical comedy *Arabella* as published in Fischer's 1979 edition of Hofmannsthal's complete works. I will not discuss the text of the libretto as it was written for the opera and will refer to the work as a "play," a "comedy," or a "piece."

3. Gerhard H. Weiß's reference to a short interchange between Dominik and Adelaide appearing in Fischer's 1956 edition of *Arabella*, which is not included in the version published in 1979, underscores Hofmannsthal's view of Austria's geopolitical position:

> DOMINIK. Wir schweben immer über einem Abgrund—
> ADELAIDE. Wie geistreich! Und wie wahr, mein Freund!
> *Mit einem Glas Champagner*
> Der Preuße droht von links, der Russe droht von rechts—
> doch unser Schutzengel wird uns erhalten!
> DOMINIK. Die Liebe ists, die uns erhalten wird, allein die Liebe! (71–72)

4. Slavonia, the easternmost part of Croatia, was conquered by the Ottomans in 1526 and remained in their possession for about 150 years until the Habsburgs regained it (Goldstein 36–46).

5. In the post-Congress Vienna of 1860, the impoverished Viennese family Waldner seeks a rich husband for their beautiful daughter, Arabella, hoping that he will save them from debt. They dress and present their other daughter, Zdenka, as a young man because they can only afford to marry off one of their daughters in a manner befitting their social rank. Count Waldner, an addicted gambler, has a rich friend in the Habsburg province of Slavonia to whom he sends a picture of the beautiful Arabella. But instead of reaching the friend, who is deceased, the picture reaches his no less rich nephew Mandryka, who, enchanted by the image, travels to Vienna to meet the beauty. In Vienna, Arabella is surrounded by wooers, but none arouse her interest until she meets the stranger Mandryka, who fascinates her with his simple, rural habits. The two young people feel genuine affection for each other and are about to be joined in matrimony when Zdenka, pretending to be Arabella, gives Matteo, one of Arabella's suitors, the key to Arabella's bedroom and tells him she will receive him there later that evening. Zdenka does this because she is in love with Matteo and fears he will leave Vienna if rejected by Arabella. Mandryka overhears Matteo and Zdenka's conversation and, convinced of Arabella's deception and infuriated with jealousy, demands an explanation from Arabella. In the last act, the errors and confusion are clarified and both couples unite in love and understanding.

6. Magris's reading may well be influenced by the the genre of the libretto, which goes beyond the literary in order to achieve musical and visual effects onstage. In fact, the correspondence between Richard Strauss and Hofmannsthal reveals that Strauss insisted on a more stagy and less dramatic plot and requested from Hofmannsthal more emotional conflicts in *Arabella* to justify the music. Hofmannsthal agreed with most of Strauss's suggestions concerning the arousal of Mandryka's jealousy through the misunderstanding in the third act and accepted these changes in order to satisfy Strauss's aspiration to create a "conflict that is visible and audible onstage [...]" (Bottenberg 129).

7. Rudolf Schäfer makes the insightful observation that the fortune-teller prophecies in a general as well as an abstract way that which will unfold in the course of the comedy. Her prophecy provides only a very rough scheme for general human interrelations and by no means determines the plot; rather, it leaves open countless possibilities for acting, thus giving the characters freedom to choose between these possibilities. However, the characters still move within the boundaries of the general scheme and flesh out the surfaces marked by the outline (146).

8. The *Haupt- und Staatsaktion* is a theatrical genre that in traditional literary theory was considered trivial. It was created by German traveling theater troupes in the late seventeenth century. As Wilpert puts it, these plays were "auf dem breiten Publikumsgeschmack der Zeit zugeschnitten [...], im Handlungsaufbau stereotype und lit. wertlose Tragödien [...]" (361).

Hofmannsthal drew his inspiration both from the tradition of the Austrian "Volksstück" and from the "serious" Burgtheater. Moreover, *Arabella* was based on two of Hofmannsthal's earlier projects, one of which was a fragment for a Viennese "Volksstück," "Der Fiaker als Graf" (Bottenberg 128).

9. "Médisance" is the French word for "intrigue."

10. I use the term "dramatic irony" in the two senses Manfred Pfister assigns to the term, namely: "[...] wenn die sprachliche Äußerung oder das außersprachliche Verhalten einer Figur für den Rezipienten aufgrund seiner überlegenen Informiertheit eine der Intention der Figur widersprechende Zusatzbedeutung erhält. Im ersten Fall handelt es sich um verbale dramatische Ironie, im zweiten um aktionale. [...] Die dramatische Situation wird [...] auf der syntagmatischen Ebene durch ein Arrangement der Situationen erzeugt, die dem Rezipienten Verbindungen zwischen ihnen sichtbar macht, die der Figur selbst nicht einsehbar sind [...] (88–89).

11. The names Arabella, Zdenka, and Mandryka also hint at the dynamics between the "self" and the "Other." Arabella and Zdenka live in Vienna and have a German surname, but their first names are Italian (Arabella) and Slavic (Zdenka), respectively; the latter is also relatively common in Croatia. Both names refer to the peoples of the Habsburg Monarchy and imply that the "Austrian" is necessarily only part German, i.e., has the "Other" as an inherent part of the "self." Mandryka, on the other hand, is a Slavic, but not Croatian, name. It is not clear whether Hofmannsthal used it in error or wanted to attribute pan-Slavic traits to this character.

Mandryka also uses the Hungarian word "teschek" ("please") repeatedly, which reflects the centuries-long political connections between Croatia and Hungary as well as the Hungarian cultural imprint in Slavonia, implying that all cultures of the former Habsburg Monarchy contain "the other culture(s)" in themselves.

12. Schäfer points to the dual composition of Mandryka's character: "Wie ein Kind zu den Erwachsenen seines ihm vertrauten Umkreises aufblickt, so blickt Mandryka nicht nur zur Frau im allgemeinen und zu Arabella im besonderen auf, sondern auch zu Kaiser und Kaiserin [...], zu Adelaide [...], schließlich auch zu der in ein Mädchen zurückgewandelten Zdenka [...]" (154). On the other hand, Mandryka's character displays traits of an aristocrat and a large-estate owner, which are revealed in his "imperativische Redeweise" (154).

13. Franz Tumler "hebt nur das Angedeutete der Herkunft Mandrykas richtig hervor, wenn er vom Unbestimmbaren spricht, das hereinfließe, vom gegen Asien verschwimmenden Himmel" (Schäfer 151).

14. According to Schäfer, the "green paradise" of the Slavonia in *Arabella* is a variation of the paradise described in the essay "Die Idee Europa" (161).

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