Ascription of Identity: The Bild Motif and the Character of Lulu

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The search for identity is tied to the received past, but requires the past to be given a configuration with a stamp of ownership. Our fragmented storied past must be given a configuration that will have the power to refigure our experience in the construction of my personal and our collective identities.

Henry Isaac Venema, Identifying Selfhood

As is well known, in 1905 Alban Berg attended a private performance of Frank Wedekind's Die Büchse der Pandora in Vienna. This seminal event, in which the author himself played the part of Jack the Ripper, was preceded by an introductory lecture on the play by Viennese critic Karl Kraus, which left a lasting impression

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on Berg.¹ This impression lay dormant until 1928, when he settled on Wedekind’s Lulu plays, Erdgeist and Die Büchse der Pandora, for his second opera after considering and eventually rejecting Gerhart Hauptmann’s Und Pippa Tanzt.² Kraus’s lecture was extensive and addressed several issues, including the perception of womanhood and the typological roles of some characters, all of which he related to the moral message of the play. The passage that addresses Lulu’s portrait was particularly influential in Berg’s conception of the portrait’s role in his opera. The passage reads:

It is more clearly evident than earlier on [e.g. in Erdgeist] that the tragic heroine of the drama is in fact [Lulu’s] beauty: her portrait, the picture of her painted when at the height of her beauty, plays a more important role than Lulu herself.³

This lecture was crucial in Berg’s understanding and operatic rendering of Wedekind’s play. While composing Lulu in 1934 (29 years after attending that lecture), Berg sent Kraus a birthday card containing an excerpt from Alwa’s aria “Eine Seele, die sich im Jenseits den Schlaf aus den Augen reibt.” These are the exact opening words of Kraus’s lecture that preceded the 1905 performance of Die Büchse der Pandora. This card represents therefore a symbolic gesture of indebtedness and gratitude to the Verehrter Meister (Venerated Master) who helped Berg understand questions of art and life.⁴


⁴ Letter to Karl Kraus on the occasion of his 50th birthday on 28 April 1924. Kraus’s influence on Berg’s conception of Lulu has been acknowledged by several scholars. Willi Reich, for example, points out that Berg noted down parts of Kraus’s lecture and that he “identified himself completely with the conception of the Lulu tragedy contained in Kraus’s speech.” Reich himself starts his discussion of Berg’s Lulu with an extended quote from the lecture. See Willi Reich, Alban Berg: trans. Cornelius Cardew (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965), 156–60. Susanne Rode, on the other hand, traces Kraus’s influence in Berg’s life and work based on his reception of Kraus’s journal Die Fackel, which Berg read almost religiously; see her Berg und Kraus. For a discussion of Berg’s intellectual circle in Vienna, see Andrew Barker, “Battles of the Mind: Berg and the Cultural Politics of ‘Vienna 1900,’” in The Cambridge Companion to Berg, ed. Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997), 24–37.
In light of Kraus’s interpretation, Berg gave Lulu’s portrait a significance that goes far beyond its role in Wedekind’s plays. Indeed, he substantially amended Wedekind’s text and changed the function of Lulu’s portrait in the opera. These transformations reveal Berg’s conception of Lulu, from the unfolding to the final development of her character. I shall argue that, as a representation of Lulu’s beauty, the portrait defines the perception of her sexuality for virtually every character in the opera and affects, in the large scale, Lulu’s own sense of self-identity. Consequently, the portrait is continuously present and symbolizes Lulu’s identity for herself and others. Thus, more than just an objective representation, Lulu’s portrait is a constant reminder of who Lulu is in the opera.

Most importantly, Berg assigned a leitmotivic set to the portrait, the Bild motive, which effectively turns the portrait into a symbol of all that defines Lulu. In the opening scene Lulu’s melodic series, the most recognizable musical element associated with her character, emerges not from the opera’s Basic Set but from the Bild motive. At the center of the opera’s palindromic interlude, the Film Music, the Bild motive represents a turning point in Lulu’s existence, one which gives her back the will to live after a moment of despair. In the final scene, the Bild motive appears as the measure and summary of Lulu’s decline, eventually determining her fate. In fact, the Bild motive pervades the entire work, marking significant dramatic and structural moments in the opera. Yet scholars addressing Berg’s rendering of the Lulu character have historically focused on just three musical passages: the so-called Lulu’s “Entrance” music, the “Coda” of the Sonata, and Lulu’s Lied, without fully examining Lulu’s portrait and the Bild motive in the interpretation of her character.6

5 While this set is known in the literature as “Picture Chords,” I shall retain Berg’s denomination in the present study; he called it “Bild motiv” and “Bild Harmonien.” Given its complex functions in the opera—it represents a portrait, a shadow, a reflected image, and Lulu as an object of imagination—the term “Bild motive” seems more appropriate and closer to the composer’s intentions for several reasons. First, the German word Bild is more polysemic than its English counterpart. Whereas the word “picture” implies primarily images associated with a portrait or photograph, the German word “Bild” includes meanings that extend from images associated specifically with photographs and paintings to complex connotations of ideas and metaphors. Second, the word “chords” implies vertical construction of simultaneities that may or may not be related to other simultaneities. The Bild motive presents, however, a strong sense of unity because of an octatonic segment in both the prime and inversion forms of the set. In effect, the octatonic segment on the top line provides an aural element that ties the motive together. Finally, the Bild motive presents referential functions related to issues of desire, androgyny, and identity. Therefore, they also reflect cultural values and ideals that transcend her character.6

I shall proceed by addressing the different interpretations regarding Berg’s rendering of Lulu’s character. Then, I examine the symbolic functions of the portrait throughout the opera. Starting in the pre-compositional phase, the association of the portrait as a sign of Lulu’s identity unfolds in three stages: In Act 1 several characters establish the portrait as a sign of her identity (particularly their gazing at the portrait, with directions duly provided by Berg); in Act 2 Lulu becomes aware of the meaning of her portrait and adopts it as an emblem of her identity; and in Act 3, Lulu realizes she no longer has the beauty that once characterized her youth, and when confronted with her portrait, strongly rejects it. Through the pervasive presence of both the portrait and its leitmotivic set, Berg systematically turned Lulu’s portrait into a visual and aural emblem of her identity.

Identifying Lulu

Scholars addressing Berg’s rendering of Lulu’s character face what may be considered the most difficult question yet to be answered: Who is Lulu? Based on the examination of primarily three passages mentioned above, the character of Lulu has undergone a variety of interpretations with changes in both number and quality. For Donald Mitchell, she represents a mythic character, “the Universal Mistress we all desire to possess or emulate.” Similarly, George Perle sees her as a mythical character, but instead of one Lulu there are two Lulus in the opera: “One is the Erdgeist, the goddess who ... represents the power of nature, the daemonic, which never wearies of seducing.... The other is her human incarnation, the natural, and therefore, innocent woman, who represents for all men the ideal fulfillment of sexual desire.”

With the completion of the opera in 1979, Lulu’s character acquires different meanings in the scholarship. Leo Treitler, for example, sees Lulu under a multiplicity of roles and identities, the embodiment of “all fantasies and fears through which the male characters project their hopes and dreads vis-à-vis woman.” Karen Pegley, on the other
hand, interprets Lulu as the embodiment of a “femme fatale type,” who “threatens stability throughout the opera’s narrative.” Finally, Judith Lochhead argues that the musical passages associated with Lulu are “in-authentic” because of their apparent “Mahlerian” style, which contradicts Berg’s late 12-tone compositional method. And because these passages are inauthentic, they cannot represent an authentic character. Thus, they represent Lulu as a “parodic” character who only “performs” feminine identities and “depicts . . . ‘Womanly’ features in order to criticize them.” By considering Lulu a performer of identities, Lochhead turns her into a mere “signifier” with no character of her own.

Despite the multiple interpretations regarding Lulu’s identity, these studies examine basically the same musical passages discussed in Mitchell’s 1954 article, namely Lulu’s “Entrance” music, the “Coda” of the Sonata, and Lulu’s Lied. In fact, they reflect the same difficulties he had in establishing those passages as emblems of her identity, because “what goes on in the orchestra pit and on stage fail to match.” For these scholars, as Lochhead observes, the “primary difficulty in defining and even describing ‘who Lulu is’ has to do with the impossibility of tracing a single, continuous feature that defines her personality.” While the musical passages mentioned above do not provide continuous elements that define Lulu’s identity, Berg established two elements that remain constant throughout the opera and are always associated with Lulu: her portrait and its leitmotivic set.

Admittedly, the character of Lulu displays complex levels of representations. As Leroy Shaw has argued, in creating her character Wedekind attempted to “represent something that defied comprehension and transcended its concrete manifestation and yet behaved like a dramatis persona.” As a human character, she is vulnerable to the adversities of life, such as disease and death; this becomes especially apparent in the second half of the opera. On the other hand, as a mythical character—die Urgestalt des Weibes (the primal form of woman), as she is presented by the Animal Trainer in the prologue—she also represents a character that transcends moral conventions. In addition, the
constant change of names (Nelly, Eve, Mignon) and costumes only contributes to masking her true identity.18

Indeed, there is an aura of mystery around Lulu that is intensified by the constant presence of her portrait. Like her many names and costumes, the Pierrot of her portrait (a monodimensional puppet-like figure from the commedia dell’arte whose costume promotes confusion about its gender) represents a mask that hides her identity.19 Yet, because Pierrot represents a character that constantly recreates and innovates his own roles, its symbolism resonates with Lulu’s personality.20 Looking beyond the mask, however, the portrait reflects Lulu’s beauty, the source of her fortunes and eventually her fate. Naomi Ritter argues that because Wedekind’s Erdgeist and Die Büchse der Pandora reflect “Lulu’s desperate and fatal quest for her own identity, her portrait may serve as the most pervasive and enigmatic symbol of that quest.”21 Perhaps this was the core of Berg’s understanding of the portrait’s function in the opera.

Rendering Lulu’s Portrait

The symbolic importance of Lulu’s portrait is evident from Berg’s pervasive annotations in his personal copies of Erdgeist and Die Büchse der Pandora, which he used in the formation of the libretto, and throughout the autograph sources of Lulu, from the early sketches to the finished work.22 These annotations, many of which remain unpub-

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18 As Leo Treitler observed, Lulu’s names acquire different meanings according to each husband; see his “The Lulu Character and the Character of Lulu,” 289–96. But names like Eve and Mignon clearly evoke figures like the biblical Eve and Mignon from Goethe’s Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship, respectively. These allusions suggest that these names also acquire meaning that extend beyond the work itself. In fact, Lulu is not unique. Judith from Bartók’s Duke Bluebeard’s Castle represents one of such cases. For an interpretation of her name in relation to fin-de-siècle culture, see Carl Stuart Leafstedt’s “The Figure of Judith in Early Twentieth-Century Art and Culture: The Significance of a Name,” in his “Music and Drama in Béla Bartók’s Opera Duke Bluebeard’s Castle,” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard Univ., 1994), 89–135. For a discussion of the significance of Nana’s name from Emile Zola’s novel, see Bernice Chitnis, Reflecting on Nana (London: Routledge, 1991), 1–21.

19 Oskar Schlemmer, whose 1922 Das Triadische Ballet (The Triadic Ballet) presents the characters of Pierrot, Harlequin, and Columbine, made the following comment: “costume and mask emphasize the body’s identity or they change it; they express its nature or they are purposely misleading about it.” Quoted in Glenn Waltkins, Pyramids at the Louvre: Music, Culture, and Collage from Stravinsky to the Postmodernists (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1994), 315.


22 These sources are now housed at the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung (ÖNB, MS). For a list and description of these sources, see Rosemary Hilmar,
lished and previously unexamined, include general descriptions of the portrait’s appearances throughout the opera and specific functions in key structural and dramatic passages. In fact, they reveal much of Berg’s conception of the portrait’s role in the opera.

Figure 1 shows Berg’s overall plan for the portrait, as it appears in every scene of the opera. While some of the annotations refer to the placement of the portrait (e.g. I/2: “in the hall, on the easel”; III/2: “in the dark room”), others refer to the viewers. In I/3, for example, as a poster, the portrait becomes the object of Alwa’s dream of writing an opera based on Lulu’s life. In that same function, it replaces her on stage and becomes the focus of attention in the dialogue between Alwa and the Prince, making its appearance highly symbolic. III/1 refers to the portrait in the hands of the Marquis, who uses it to blackmail Lulu. Significantly, the appearances of the portrait in I/3 and III/1 are bracketed, suggesting a relation to the overall symmetry of the opera, which in this case is bound to Berg’s conception of the two characters involved: the Prince and the Marquis.23

Thomas Ertelt has argued that the sketch in Figure 1 refers to the portrait as perceived by Alwa.24 Indeed, Alwa is present in all these appearances and the stage directions that Berg provides specifically point to Alwa’s attention to Lulu’s portrait. Even the crossing out in III/1 reflects Alwa’s negligible role in that scene. However, considering that the portrait has numerous functions and becomes the focus of attention for virtually every character in the opera, it would be an error to single out Alwa as the only observer described by the sketch. Rather, this sketch reflects Berg’s concern with the pervasive presence of the portrait in the opera and its manifold functions.

Berg’s special interest in the role of the portrait is particularly evident in Figure 2. Note that at the bottom portion of the sketch Berg writes: “im Kerker ihr Schatten (=Bild)” (in jail, her shadow [=picture]). The interchange shadow/portrait is significant. In fact, this annotation refers to the midpoint of the palindromic Film Music, an interlude between the first and second scenes of Act 2. According to the program that Berg provides for this interlude, as Lulu’s shadow, the portrait represents her resignation from life; and as her image reflected in a dustpan, the portrait represents her will to live. The portrait represents

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23 For a discussion of the symmetrical roles played by these subsidiary characters, see Patricia Hall, A View of Berg’s “Lulu” Through the Autograph Sources (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1996), 71–76.

Bild

$\sqrt{I_1}$ im Entstehen
$\sqrt{I_2}$ im Salon auf die Staffelei
($I_3$ als Plakat)

$\sqrt{II_1}$ bei Schön an der Wand wird von Alwa geholt (Kamin)

$\left\{\begin{array}{l}
\text{in der Hand des Mädchenhändlers mit Foto} \\
\text{an der Wand u.}
\end{array}\right.$

$III_2$ Dachkammer
Lulu selbst immer verkleidet
(5)
im Kerker ihr Schatten (=Bild)
[in jail her shadow (=portrait)]
therefore a turning point in Lulu’s existence. Significantly, in the corresponding scene of the original play Wedekind makes no allusion to Lulu’s portrait. Berg’s addition makes this section highly symbolic, particularly for the development of Lulu’s character as I shall demonstrate below.

Finally, Figure 3 shows what can be considered one of the most significant annotations regarding the portrait. It consists of a single line on a sheet of paper in which Berg writes: “I/1 Dr. Schön’s Braut müss erwähnt werden—ihr Bild nicht!” (I/1 Dr. Schön’s bride must be mentioned—not her portrait!).25 This sketch reflects Berg’s awareness that in Erdgeist there are several portraits in Schwarz’s studio and that the portrait of Dr. Schön’s fiancée, like Lulu’s portrait, is prominent in the first two scenes. In fact, in the second scene of the play Dr. Schön’s fiancée and her portrait become the focus of the following conversation upon the entrance of Lulu and her husband, Dr. Goll:

Goll. [to Dr. Schön] What wind blows you here?
Schön. I was inspecting the picture [Bild] of my fiancée.
Lulu. (advancing) Your fiancée is here?
Goll. So you’re having work done here too?
Lulu. (looking at the half-length portrait) But look! Enchanting! Delightful!
Goll. (looking about him) I suppose you have her hidden about here somewhere?
Lulu. So this is the sweet infant prodigy who has transformed you into a human being...
Goll. And you tell no one about it?
Lulu. (turning around) Is she really so serious?
Schön. Probably the aftermath of finishing school, Madame.
Goll. (looking at the portrait) One can see that you’ve undergone a profound change.
Lulu. Now you really can’t keep her waiting any longer.
Schön. I intend to announce our engagement in a fortnight’s time.26

In constructing his libretto, however, Berg eliminated the two initial scenes of Erdgeist. Consequently, the portrait of Dr. Schön’s fiancée and Dr. Goll himself were also eliminated. As Thomas Ertelt observed,

25 ÖNB, MS: F21 Berg 80/iv, fol. 36v. On the other side of the same sheet (fol. 37r) Berg writes: “I/1: Beginn Bild, l Ende V Bild,” which suggests an intent to establish a large-scale symmetry with the presentation of Lulu’s portrait. This sheet is found inside of Berg’s copy of Alfred Baresel’s Das Jazzbuch, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Jul. Heinr. Zimmermann, 1926), from which Berg studied jazz rhythms for the backstage music in the third scene of Act i.Significantly, the backstage music is based on the Bild motive.
Figure 3 reflects Berg’s intent to give exclusivity to Lulu’s portrait, which results, in effect, in the elimination of all other portraits from the plays. We can see that by eliminating all other portraits to which Lulu could be compared, he also individualizes Lulu herself.

**Portraying Lulu**

Having discussed Berg’s attention to Lulu’s portrait in the sketches, there is still a lingering question concerning why it was so important in his conception of her character. Given the portrait’s musico-dramatic significance in the opera, it is surprising that, like Wedekind, Berg only suggests that it portray Lulu dressed in a Pierrot costume. This direction, however, is enough for scholars to compare Berg’s rendering of Lulu in relation to representations of women in *fin-de-siècle* paintings. Leo Treitler, for example, recognized that “the most palpable sign for the Lulu character as a creation of male desires is the Pierrot portrait.” He then continues:

Berg made quite the point of showing the Pierrot persona as a source for the character. His directions (not Wedekind’s) have Lulu appear in the Prologue in her Pierrot costume. . . . Like the Eve-Lilith symbolism, the Pierrot portrait connects to a shatteringly ambivalent attitude about Woman. But this is at the same time a symbolism that allows the poet and composer to show the Lulu character struggling against that attitude to gain her own authenticity, a struggle that reflects the struggle of sex roles from another side.

In this “struggle of sex roles,” the portrait reflects images that “represent illusion and play, but at the same time disillusion, dejection.” For Treitler, the portrait ultimately represents qualities similar to “what is embodied in the femme fatale.” As examples, Treitler highlights sev-

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27 Ertelt, *Quellenstudien*, 62.
28 Because of this limited description, the portrait varies substantially according to different productions. In the 1963 production of the opera at the Zurich Stadttheater, Lulu is portrayed as a temptress in a dress that accentuates her sexuality (see the reproduction in Reich, *Alban Berg*, illustration 28). In the 1996 production of The London Philharmonic, directed by Graham Vick, the portrait shows Lulu in a loose shirt with tight pants in a snakeskin pattern. Arguably, it represents Lulu as she is introduced by the Animal Trainer in the prologue, namely as a “snake,” the “primal form of woman.” To my knowledge, the version of the portrait presented by The Metropolitan Opera, produced by John Dexter, is the closest to the descriptions of Pierrot and to Berg’s intentions. It presents Lulu as a plain, innocent girl, in a top with large buttons and loose pantaloons. However, because she also holds a staff, the portrait represents a shepherdess rather than Pierrot.
29 Treitler, “Lulu Character,” 300.
30 Ibid., 302.
31 Ibid.
eral paintings from the turn of the century, such as Edouard Manet’s *Nana*, George Grosz’s *Near the Limit*, and several of Edvard Munch’s works, including *Madonna*, *Salome*, *Vampire*, and *Carmen*.

Likewise, Karen Pegley initiates her discussion on the representation of Lulu as a femme fatale with Gustav Klimt’s paintings. She argues that “when analyzing Lulu’s musical representation, it is essential first to consider a predominant feature of fin-de-siècle femme fatales upon which her operatic character was based: female ambiguity. . . . this male/female dichotomy was heightened in numerous paintings by Gustav Klimt, an artist associated with Berg’s Viennese social circle.”\(^\text{32}\) Her examples include Klimt’s *Fishblood* (1898) and *Judith and Holofernes* (1901).

Indeed, these paintings are part of what Shearer West terms “icons of womanhood.” According to West, these examples also reveal the artists’ confusions, which contributed to constructions of stereotypical images of womanhood. She argues that

> By forcing women to fit a series of painterly roles, artists presented what appeared to be monolithic icons which often reinforced prevailing stereotypes. However, the need to represent women, and to circumscribe them in this way, resulted in an oversimplification which obscured the more complex reality. . . . Women were defined in terms of men, and were seen to be helpless and purposeless outside their relationships with men.\(^\text{33}\)

In many respects, Lulu fits this profile, but we should not oversimplify the complexities that lie behind Berg’s presentation of Lulu’s portrait by simply stating that it represents a femme fatale. Granted, the portraits presented in Treitler’s and Pegley’s studies depict women as objects of men’s fears (Salome, carrying the severed head of John the Baptist, is the clearest example). These examples seem far different from what one finds in Berg’s opera, however. Among other things, they show overt female nudity which is not present in Lulu’s portrait.\(^\text{34}\) In fact, the portrait shows Lulu dressed in a Pierrot costume, one of the many costumes she wears (or alludes to) in the plays, which, like her many names, works as a mask that causes misunderstandings about the

\(^{32}\) Pegley, “Femme Fatale,” 253.

\(^{33}\) Shearer West, *Fin de Siècle: Art and Society in an Age of Uncertainty* (Woodstock, N.Y.: Overlook, 1994), 89.

\(^{34}\) I understand that I run the risk of being too literal in my reading of Lulu’s portrait. But if we are to interpret the portrait’s function, we need to also consider what it depicts. There is an allusion to a portrait of Lulu standing as Eve in front of a mirror, which suggests a display of nudity. This portrait is not shown, however.
nature of her character. By dressing as Pierrot, in fact a male costume, Lulu represents ideals of androgyny, whose threat to male identity is more subtle than the threats posed by figures such as Salome and Carmen. Moreover, the Pierrot portrait, like many Pierrot paintings of the early twentieth century, shows a rather plain character who lacks the alluring powers of those portraits discussed by Treitler and Pegley.

In Wedekind’s plays, the portrait represents primarily ideals of innocence and androgyny. Commissioned by Dr. Goll, Lulu’s first husband who calls her Nelly, the portrait becomes an emblem of what Lulu represents for him. In the original 1894 version of the Lulu play he explains how he perceives her: “For me she is little Nelly, the unfinished—the helpless—to whom a fatherly friend may not be dispensable just yet.” Gerald Izenberg has argued that the portrait fills the void of a child Dr. Goll never had, and that the androgynous, almost pre-sexual quality of the Pierrot costume also satisfies the sexual fantasies of the aging man. This pre-sexual quality also attracts the Painter, who believes that despite being married to Dr. Goll, Lulu is an innocent girl. This is so important for him that, when confronted with the truth about her sexual relationship with Dr. Schön, he commits suicide. The androgynous quality of the Pierrot costume also unveils the nature of Countess Geschwitz’s attraction to Lulu as she gazes at her portrait.

In contrast, Dr. Schön does not gaze at the portrait as other characters do. His relationship with Lulu is more direct, without mediation of her portrait. However, like other characters, he also perceives the androgynous and pre-adolescent aspects of Lulu. The clearest sign of this

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36 Perhaps the most contrasting examples of such representations of Pierrot are found in Aubrey Beardsley’s The Pierrot of the Minute (1897), with its androgynous quality; and Pablo Picasso’s Pierrot (1918), which presents a clearly male figure with a sad face. See the reproductions of these portraits in Storey, Pierrot: A Critical History of a Mask, illustrations 26 and 27.
37 For a discussion of the portrait’s role in the plays, see Ritter, “The Portrait of Lulu as Pierrot.”
40 It is significant that immediately after Countess Geschwitz refers to the ideal qualities of Lulu’s portrait, Dr. Schön becomes hostile toward her. His reaction represents, in part, a general discomfort with lesbianism, but also an anxiety caused by Lulu’s response to Countess Geschwitz. Their interaction resembles in many respects the relationship between Nana and Satin in Emile Zola’s novel, Nana. As in Zola’s novel, this relationship represents a source of destabilization to male hierarchy. For a discussion of the interaction between Nana and other female characters, including Satin, see Chitnis, Reflecting on Nana, 50-68.
perception is represented by the name that he gives her: Mignon. This is one such case in which a name reveals the nature of their relationship. Mignon is a 12-year-old dancer in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, whose personal traits are similar to Lulu's. Like Lulu, she represents an enigmatic character who, in the eyes of Laertes, "represents in all its true colors the sex that [he has] such good reasons to hate. She is the real Eve, the progenitrix of the whole female race."\(^4\) Wilhelm Meister, who adopts Mignon as his daughter, becomes attracted to her because of the androgynous and enigmatic image she projects (in several instances she is mistaken as a boy). Dr. Schön and Lulu's relationship is similar in many aspects. However, he goes a step further and turns Lulu into his mistress.

For Berg the portrait also represents ideals of beauty and youth, which become Lulu's very essence. In many respects, Berg's rendering of Lulu's portrait reveals his understanding of Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, a copy of which he possessed.\(^4\) There is a striking similarity of scenarios between Wilde's novel and *Lulu*. At the beginning of Wilde's work there is a close resemblance between Dorian and his portrait. However, over the course of the book, the portrait reflects all of Dorian's transgressions and grows older while he remains youthful. In *Lulu*, the opposite happens: while Lulu grows older, her portrait remains a constant reminder of her youth. In both cases, there is a confrontation between the protagonists and their portraits at the end, which proves to be fateful.

While the analogy between the two works is evident in Lulu's reaction to the portrait, it also extends to other characters. As an artist, the Painter is responsible for the creation of the portrait as an object of desire. In this regard, Berg's representation of the Painter is no different than Wilde's Basil, who becomes very protective, and even attracted to


\(^{4\text{2}}\) The volume containing *The Picture of Dorian Gray* from Berg's collected edition of Wilde's works at the Alban Berg Stiftung is missing. We can see his appreciation of this novel, however, by the extensive quotations found in his collection of handwritten notebooks entitled "Von der Selbsterkenntnis" (ÖNB, MS: F21 Berg 100/i-xii). This collection contains neatly written quotes and aphorisms by several authors, which apparently helped Berg take positions on several issues from politics to gender identity and the emancipation of women. Its systematic organization, with author and subject indexes at the end of each volume and a general index for the whole collection in volume xii, suggests that Berg used these notebooks as references throughout his life. Of particular importance are the passages from Wilde's book describing ideals of beauty and youth, which reflect perceptions of womanhood prevalent in fin-de-siècle Europe. For a discussion of these quotations, see Rode, *Berg und Kraus*, 102–6.
Dorian Gray, because of his youthful beauty as represented in the portrait. Incidentally, when Basil sees Dorian's portrait at the end of the novel, he reacts with horror to its transformation. At that moment, Basil becomes aware of the true nature of Dorian Gray's character. In Lulu, the Painter retains the image of Lulu's portrait in his mind—one of youth and innocence—and when informed by Dr. Schôn about her past, he has a similar reaction to that of Basil. It becomes clear in the course of the opera that his perception of Lulu is built on an illusion, and when confronted with the truth about her character, he commits suicide.

Similarly, Lord Henry becomes interested in Dorian Gray because of his portrait. In the course of the work Lord Henry becomes Dorian's intellectual mentor and, through his articulate and engaging speech, makes Dorian aware of his own beauty and the effects of time on it, as this excerpt demonstrates:

People say sometimes that Beauty is only superficial. That may be so. But at least it is not so superficial as Thought is. To me, Beauty is the wonder of the wonders. It is only shallow people who do not judge appearances. The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible. . . . Yes, Mr. Gray, the gods have been good to you. But what the gods give they quickly take away. You have only a few years in which to live really, perfectly, and fully. When your youth goes, your beauty will go with it, and then you will suddenly discover that there are no triumphs left for you, or have to content yourself with those mean triumphs that the memories of your past will make more bitter than defeats.43

As a result of Lord Henry's speech, Dorian becomes jealous of his own portrait and makes a wish to trade places with it. In many respects, Lord Henry is responsible for all of Dorian's actions in the novel, including his relationship with his own portrait. Arguably, Berg saw Schigolch as a distorted Lord Henry-like figure in the opera.44 Schigolch initially represents both a father figure and a "mentor" to Lulu. In the second scene of Act 1 he is the first character who overtly points out the resemblance between Lulu and her portrait.45 Schigolch is therefore instrumental in making Lulu aware of her reflected image, and ultimately responsible in the formation of her character. In the final scene of the

44 An enigmatic figure in the opera, Schigolch appears initially as an old beggar living off Lulu's wealth. During his first visit, however, he reveals that he once was a well-off man. He looks around the house, amazed, and utters: "It is like my own fifty years ago, only more modern."
45 Berg's version of this passage is substantially different from Wedekind's, where Schigolch does not give much attention to Lulu's portrait. I shall discuss this passage below.
DOS SANTOS

opera, while gazing at her portrait he sings: “Ihr Körper stand auf dem Höhepunkt seiner Entfaltung, als das Porträt gemalt wurde” (Her body was at the high point of its development when the portrait was painted). And, somewhat later, while still gazing at her portrait, he sings:

Wem sie heute in die Hände gerät, der macht sich keinen Begriff mehr von unserer Jugendzeit... Unten im Laternenschimmer nimmt sie's noch mit einem Dutzend Straßengespenstern auf. (Those into whose hands she falls today can form no conception of our youth. ... Down in the glimmer of lanterns, she can compete with a dozen other ghosts of the streets.)

Lulu’s reaction is significant. She answers: “Ich werde es ja sehen, ob du recht hast” (I am going to see if you are right), and decides to go down the street to fetch a client. While this reaction reveals Schigolch’s influence over her character, it also reflects her awareness that she no longer possesses the beauty and youth that she once had and, to paraphrase Lord Henry, that there are no triumphs left for her. The portrait represents therefore not only a reminder of her former glories, but it makes those memories “more bitter than defeats.”

Ascribing Identity

Considering Berg’s numerous references to the portrait in the sources, the process of associating Lulu’s portrait with her identity already began in the pre-compositional phase. Indeed, the role played by the portrait in her individualization is reflected in Berg’s row derivation. While the Bild motive is derived by the trichordal segmentation of the Basic Series (Ex. 1), Lulu’s melodic series, the most recognizable musical element associated with her character, is derived from the Bild motive rather than the Basic Series (Ex. 2). Karen Pegley has argued that because of its secondary derivation, Lulu’s series is “twice removed” from the Basic Series and is simply a part of Berg’s characterization of Lulu as a femme fatale. I would argue that this secondary derivation mirrors the way in which Lulu is perceived in the opera—that is, through the image of her portrait. This derivation is therefore a crucial element in establishing the portrait as a symbol of Lulu’s identity.

46 This line is not present in Wedekind’s Die Büchse der Pandora. It is therefore revealing of Berg’s conception of the relationship between Schigolch and Lulu.


EXAMPLE 1. Derivation of the Bild motive

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EXAMPLE 2. Derivation of Lulu’s melodic series

This secondary row derivation is reflected in the unfolding of the Bild motive in the opening scene, which takes place in measures 93–97, soon after Alwa’s entrance. This unfolding coincides with the emergence of Lulu’s character as the Painter finishes the portrait. It also marks the moment of closest resemblance between Lulu and the

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49 My view on the significance of the unfolding of the Bild motive in the opening scene differs from that of Patricia Hall, who states that “Berg consciously articulates the derivation of these subsidiary rows [Bild motive and major/minor triads] from the source row during their first appearance in the music. These unfoldings . . . are local events whose principal function is to demonstrate the relation of the subsidiary row to the source row. They are not complex statements of thematic symbolism, for nothing in the text justifies such a function (Hall, A View of Berg’s “Lulu,” 136–37).” Berg’s stage directions, however, with their overt allusions to the portrait, are consistent in every scene of the opera, setting the pattern for the large-scale development of the Bild motive and thus making this passage particularly symbolic.
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portrait. Significantly, while addressing Lulu in *Erdgeist*, Alwa does not allude to the portrait. Berg, on the other hand, instructs Alwa to compare Lulu with her portrait (“Lulu und das Bild miteinander vergleichend”) before expressing his desire of having her play the leading role in his opera (Ex. 3). In light of the large-scale development of the *Bild* motive, Alwa’s reaction to Lulu’s portrait in the opening scene is prophetic, setting the pattern for how Lulu is perceived in the opera, namely as an ideal woman.  

With the Painter the *Bild* motive acquires a more significant role. In the Introduction to the Canon it underlies the Painter’s sudden infatuation for Lulu while he works on her portrait. While in the corresponding scene in *Erdgeist* the Painter carries on an extensive conversation with Lulu, Berg cuts most of their dialogue, reducing it to a few phrases that only show the Painter’s increasing desire. In effect, Berg reduces Wedekind’s text to what he calls “3 malige *Introduktion,*” an introduction divided into three sections, each starting with combinations of *Bild* motive, as the pitch reduction in Example 4a–c shows. Note that the beginning of each section is transposed down a major seventh and shortened by the elimination of two sets of chords from the end of the motive. In effect, these structures represent both the Painter’s imminent physical contact with Lulu, which results in the Canon, and the alluring role of the portrait.

Near the end of the scene (mm. 305–25), during the duet between the Painter and Lulu, Berg turns the *Bild* motive into a musical reflection of her character. After Lulu’s apparent indifference to her husband’s death, the Painter asks questions about truth, God, belief, and love, to which she is unable to respond. All she can answer is “Ich weiß es nicht” (I don’t know). According to Naomi Ritter, Lulu's inability to answer existential questions imposed by the Painter reflects her “pierrotic” character. Arguably, this passage also shows Lulu’s loss of innocence and willingness to adapt to a new set of circumstances. At the end of the duet she is ready to move on. Significantly, while in the corresponding scene of the play there is no allusion to the portrait, as Patricia Hall has demonstrated, the *Bild* motive pervades the entire duet.

The most important moment in establishing the portrait as a symbol of Lulu’s identity occurs in the second scene of Act 1, during Schigolch’s visit. In the first half of the opera, he is the only character who calls Lulu by her true name and shows a familiarity that seems to extend to her

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50 For a further discussion on Alwa’s perception of Lulu, see Rode, *Berg und Kraus*, 275–81.
51 In ÖNB, MS: F21 Berg 28/iii, fol. 48r.
52 Ritter, “Portrait of Lulu,” 130.

Seh' ich recht? Frau Me-di-zin-al-rat!

Recit

poco cresc

Lulu und das Bild miteinander vergleichend

Bild (P-1) (P-5) (P-9)
EXAMPLE 4a–c. Combinations of Bild motive in the Introduction to the Canon, Act 1, scene 1

(a) mm. 132–33

(b) mm. 143–44

(c) m. 149

childhood. His reaction to her portrait—one of astonished recognition—is considerably more significant in the opera than in the play. When he sees Lulu’s portrait in the corresponding scene in Erdgeist, he casually asks: “Is that you?” suggesting that he does not think much of the painting. As Table 1 demonstrates, however, Berg replaces his question with an expression that emphasizes the resemblance between Lulu and her portrait: “Das bist ja du, du, ja du!” (That is you, you. Yes, you indeed!). In Berg’s version Schigolch’s reaction to the portrait is so intense that he even runs out of air, as Example 5 demonstrates.

The subtle change in the original text, coupled with the presence of the Bild motive, clearly changes the meaning of the portrait in this passage: The portrait now represents Lulu, from her physical appearance to her essence in the eyes of the other characters. At a deeper
level, Schigolch not only expresses the degree of resemblance between Lulu and her portrait, but by emphatically saying that the portrait is Lulu, he causes a semiotic exchange—from this moment on we are supposed to perceive the portrait and the sound of the Bild motive as if they were Lulu herself.

After Schigolch's remarks, the portrait further defines Lulu in the eyes of the other characters. After the Painter's death in the second scene of Act 1 (mm. 882–84), Berg adds the following instruction to Alwa: "unwillkürlich ihr Bild mit den Blicken streifend" (involuntarily gazing at her portrait). A few measures later Alwa confesses: "Er hatte, was sich ein Mensch nur erträumen kann" ([The Painter] had what man can only dream of). In the third scene, when he dreams about writing an opera based on Lulu's life, it is her portrait, standing as a poster, that becomes the object of his dream. The Prince perceives Lulu not through her dancing skills, as he does in Erdgeist, but by an idealization of her bodily expression, which he sees in her portrait. Berg instructs him to gaze five times at the portrait during his short appearance. As mentioned earlier, Countess Geschwitz expresses her desires when she gazes at Lulu's portrait. She is in fact the first character to emphasize its androgynous quality. She invites Lulu to accompany her to an all-women ball dressed as a man, and when Lulu asks her whether that would be appropriate, she points at the portrait and utters: "Hier sind Sie wie ein Märchen" (Here you are a fairy-tale). The Bild motive pervades all these moments, representing the effect that Lulu's portrait has on these characters.

Thus far I have examined how Berg, through specific instructions to the characters on stage and the use of the Bild motive, systematically
EXAMPLE 5. (continued)

Rit. - molto
zwei Glaschen fullend
und sich Schigolch gegenübersetzend
(event 8va ..)

Erzähl' mir! Nun?

ringt keuchend nach Luft (dim. e rit.)

mit der Musik: ein-, aus-, ein-, aus-, ein-, ausatmend

(Echo vom Echo)
(pizz)

mit der Musik:

Echo)
(pizz)

H

f

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turns Lulu’s portrait into a symbolic element that defines her in the eyes of virtually every character in the opera. Whereas in Wedekind’s *Erdgeist* these characters have more direct contact with her, in Berg’s version the portrait becomes the object representing the fulfillment of their dreams. Paradoxically, the constant allusion to Lulu’s portrait forces her to live up to the expectations of what she represents for other characters. In many respects, by establishing the portrait as a representation of her identity, social pressure also helps to forge Lulu’s self.54

Adopting Identity

In an environment that reinforces the idea that a reflected image is a true expression of one’s identity, in Act 2 Lulu gradually adopts the image reflected in her portrait as an emblem of her identity. Granted, Lulu hardly fits the profile of a self-reflective character. However, Berg provides directions for her to gaze at her portrait in several instances in which she looks inwards. Rather than just a narcissistic gesture, these moments reveal an increasing awareness of the power of her image, which she eventually emulates. Two events demonstrate this process.

The first starts when she receives three guests, Schigolch, the Athlete, and the Gymnast. While the guests talk about her past, the Athlete asks Schigolch if he is her father. Schigolch’s answer does little to illuminate our knowledge of her past: “Sie hat nie einen gehabt!” (She has never had one!). With Berg’s instruction, Lulu looks at her portrait as if it were her reflection and sings: “a gewiB, ich bin ein Wunderkind!” (Certainly, I am a child prodigy!). At that moment, in a unique passage, the three guests reinforce her association with the portrait by singing the Bild motive in the background (Ex. 6). When Lulu gazes at the portrait, she sees its alluring qualities, the reminder of her innocence and beauty. At the same time, the Bild motive reinforces this new awareness.55

The second passage occurs at the beginning of the rondo in the first scene of Act 2. Just before the love scene with Alwa, Lulu confesses: “Als ich mich im Spiegel sah, hätte ich ein Mann sein wollen ... mein

54 This is a recurrent theme in literature. Diane Cosinean, for example, argues that in a society that places such emphasis on women’s reflected images, it is “difficult to resist the temptation to believe that the image of beauty revealed by the mirror is a faithful representation of one’s essential identity.” See Diane Cosinean, *Letters and Labyrinths: Women Writing/Cultural Codes* (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 1997), 90.


For a similar approach addressing interactions between women and their reflected images analogous to the interaction between Lulu and her portrait, see Heide Withöft, *Von Angesicht zu Angesicht: Literarische Spiegelszenen*, Studies in Modern German Literature, vol. 90 (New York: Peter Lang, 1998).
Mann!" (When I looked at myself in the mirror I wanted to be a man . . . My husband!). When she utters "Mein Mann," Berg instructs her to look at the portrait as he introduces the Bild motive. While this self-reflective moment seems to imply her desire to become androgynous, it also reinforces the significance of the portrait in shaping her personality. Thus she adopts the image reflected in her portrait as a representation of her own identity.56

From this moment on, the portrait becomes emblematic of her identity and appears in key moments where her survival is at stake. Lulu's Lied in the first scene of Act 2 illustrates one such case. The Lied represents the most intimate moment in which Lulu expresses her identity while going through adverse experiences. Facing the rage of her husband, Dr. Schön, over her love affairs, Lulu attempts to convey to him that she herself has not changed, and that her actions had always been consistent. As a final thought, she expresses her awareness that she has nevertheless been misunderstood. The Lied consists of five periods with antecedent and consequent phrases, in which she sings:

1. If men have killed themselves for my sake, that does not lower my worth.
2. You knew as well why you took me as your wife, as I knew why I took you as my husband.
3. You had betrayed your best friends with me, you couldn't very well also betray yourself with me.
4. If you sacrifice the evening of your life to me, you've had the whole of my youth in exchange.
5. I've never in the world wanted to seem anything other than what I've been taken for, and no one has ever taken me for anything other than what I am. . . ."

Lulu's Lied presents not only an expression of Lulu's identity, but also the musical elements associated with her character in the course of the opera, such as the Basic Set, the Bild motive, Lulu's series, the "Erdgeist

56 This moment also illustrates a paradigm in which the attributes reflected in the portrait become part of a set of dispositions by which Lulu is recognized. To quote Paul Ricoeur: "we may relate to the notion of disposition the set of acquired identifications by which the other enters into the composition of the same. To a large extent, in fact, the identity of a person or a community is made up of these identifications with values, norms, ideals, models, and heroes, in which a person or the community recognizes itself. Recognizing oneself in contributes to recognizing oneself by. The identification with heroic figures clearly displays this otherness assumed as one's own, but this is already latent in the identification with values that make us place a 'cause' above our survival." See Paul Ricoeur, Oneself as Another, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992), 121.

fourths", and so forth. Significantly, the third phrase of the Lied consists of Bild motives, which, given its central position, turns the entire Lied into a symmetrical structure similar to a palindrome. As a whole, the Lied also represents a turning point in Lulu’s struggle to survive; instead of shooting herself, she shoots Dr. Schönh.

The symmetrical structure of the Lied, with Bild motives at the center, anticipates Berg’s use of the Bild motive in the interlude between the first and second scenes of Act 2, which marks the opera’s turning point. This interlude, which is also the incidental music for a silent film that portrays Lulu’s imprisonment and escape, is perhaps one of Berg’s most original contributions to Wedekind’s plays. For Berg, it represented one of the most important moments in the opera. In a letter to Schoenberg of 7 August 1930, he wrote:

The orchestral interlude, which in my version bridges the gap between the last act of Erdgeist and the beginning of Büchse der Pandora, is also the focal point for the whole tragedy and—after the ascent of the opening acts (or scenes)—the descent in the following scenes marks the beginning of the retrograde.

Composed as a strict palindrome, the Film Music shows the significance of this symmetrical musical structure in the dramatic development of the opera. Berg provided a program for the interlude that matches the action on the film screen with the presentation of the musical materials associated with each character portrayed in the film. Following the overall symmetry of the opera, the characters who help convict Lulu in

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58 For Perle, Lulu’s Lied represents a “great aria of self-awareness” (Operas, vol 2: “Lulu,” 81). But the Lied has not been unanimously considered an expression of Lulu’s identity. Judith Lochhead, for example, argues that beyond the information about Lulu and Dr. Schönh, “the song provides little detail on how the Lulu character defines herself and what motivates her actions” (“Lulu’s Feminine performance,” 240). She argues that Lulu’s Lied does not represent Lulu as an authentic character because it presents several musical elements rather than a single continuous element that characterizes Lulu. Apparently, Lochhead’s concept of identity is tied to the theory of actions, which disregards, for example, concepts of fragmented self. Paul Ricoeur has warned against this kind of approach to issues of identity. He argues that “without the recourse to narration, the problem of personal identity would in fact be condemned to an antinomy with no solution. Either we must posit a subject identical with itself through diversity of its different states, or, following Hume and Nietzsche, we must hold that this identical subject is nothing more than a substantialist illusion, whose elimination merely brings to light a pure manifold of cognitions, emotions, and volitions.” See Paul Ricoeur, Time and Narrative, vol. 3, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pallauer (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1988), 246.

59 For a discussion of this interlude in relation to the early 20th-century film tradition, see Melissa Ursula Dawn Goldsmith, “Alban Berg’s Filmic Music: Intentions and Extensions of the Film Music Interlude in the Opera Lulu” (Ph.D. diss., Louisiana State Univ., 2002).

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the first half of the interlude help her escape prison in the second half. Most significantly, Lulu’s portrait represents a turning point in her existence at the midpoint of the interlude. According to the program, partially shown in Figure 4, the portrait has two functions: As Lulu’s shadow it represents her resignation from life; and as a reflection in a dustpan, it represents her will to live. This moment is marked with successive statements of the Bild motive in both prime and inverted forms answered by its retrograde, as the summary of pitch collections in Example 7 shows. In essence, this mirror-like musical structure becomes a metaphor for Lulu’s act of looking in the mirror.

In her discussion of this passage in Die Büchse der Pandora, Elizabeth Boa argues that while Lulu is in jail, “[her] reflected image confirms her sense of identity.”61 While this need to see her reflected image is latent in Wedekind’s play, Berg’s allusion to Lulu’s portrait and the symmetrical structure formed by converging sets of Bild motives followed by their retrograde represent the precise turning point in Lulu’s existence, one which eventually leads to her freedom. This interlude thus reinforces her identification with her portrait: Lulu has to see her reflected image to regain her identity. But in contrast to Wedekind’s play, the portrait is now a necessary element in her struggle to survive.

The act of adopting an identity based on an image, however, has its costs. As a result of imprisonment and disease, Lulu loses her beauty, and any resemblance to her former youth. The Athlete shows the first sign of the consequences of this loss of beauty in the second scene of Act 2. As part of an escape plan, Lulu contracts cholera, which substantially affects her appearance. The Athlete, an unrefined character who builds his expectation on marrying Lulu and having her work by his side as a beautiful acrobat, reacts strongly when he first sees her: “Woher nimmt du die Schamlosigkeit, mit einem solchen Wolfgang hier zu erscheinen?” (Where did you get the nerve to appear here with such a dogface?). He immediately threatens to inform the police of her location, which anticipates her misfortunes in the next act. Despite her apparent loss of beauty, Lulu still identifies herself with her portrait, and when left alone with Alwa, her first request is to see her portrait: “Wo ist denn mein Bild?” (Where is my picture?). This moment also marks the return of the Bild motive in the second scene of Act 2.

**Rejecting Identity**

In Act 3 the environment changes dramatically. The Paris scene is cast in a casino, giving the false appearance of wealth while showing the

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FIGURE 4. Program for the Film Music (partially shown)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prison</th>
<th>Prison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The prison door shuts</td>
<td>The prison door opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial resignation</td>
<td>Awakening will to live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lulu's portrait — as a</td>
<td>Lulu's portrait — as a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shadow on the prison wall</td>
<td>reflection in a dustpan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One year's imprisonment

EXAMPLE 7. Summary of pitch collections and program: Film Music, mm. 685–89

volatility of money. This scene shows the trade of *Jungfrau-Aktien* (literally, “virgin shares”), a façade for both economic speculation, which reaches a total collapse at the end of the scene, and the sale of young women to prostitution, represented by the presence of a *Fünfzehnjährige* (a fifteen-year-old girl) in an adult environment. The Paris scene is composed of three ensembles intermingled with duets between Lulu and other characters. Her duet with the Marquis has profound implications in her association with the portrait.
It becomes clear that because of Lulu's loss of beauty, her portrait no longer guarantees her survival in such an environment. The Marquis sends her pictures (Bilder) to an Egyptian brothel owner in an attempt to sell her into the slavery of prostitution. While Lulu negotiates with the Marquis for a possible resolution of his demands, her reaction to his giving her pictures away is stronger than to his threats to place her into prostitution: "Die Bilder, die ich dir gab?" (The portraits I gave you? [Berg's emphasis]). On the musical level, Berg presents the Bild motive in prime and inverted forms simultaneously, followed by their retrograde (Ex. 8). This mirror-like structure represents yet another turning point in Lulu's life, one that marks a change in the nature of her association with the portrait.

The Marquis reveals to Lulu that her portrait is instrumental in turning her into a mere object. In one of her most memorable outbursts, Lulu argues: "Aber ich kann nicht das einzige verkaufen, was je mein eigen war" (I cannot sell the only thing that I have ever owned). According to Elizabeth Boa, working at a brothel would be for Lulu similar to her experience in prison and "would reduce her sexuality, the very foundation of her sense of self, to a commodity to be bought and sold." The duet between Lulu and the Marquis is significant at several levels. While this moment suggests an ultimate merging of Lulu and her portrait, paradoxically it initiates her dissociation from it. This happens literally when she escapes the Marquis, leaving her portrait behind. Psychologically, this separation represents a break with her self-image. While she is adamantly opposed to working as a prostitute, the harsher reality of the next scene forces her to do just that: as an escapee from the police living in poverty, she becomes a prostitute in London.

Finally, the most significant moment in Lulu's association with her portrait comes in the form of a rejection. As a London prostitute providing for Alwa and Schigolch, she retains little of the physical qualities she had when she was young and is now almost unrecognizable. When Countess Geschwitz brings the portrait back to Lulu in London, Alwa unrolls it with growing expectation, and in amazement he sings: "Mein Gott, das ist ja Lulus Bild" (My God! That is Lulu's portrait). Lulu, on the other hand, strongly rejects it: "Mein Bild! Mir aus den Augen! Werft es zum Fenster hinaus!" (My portrait! Take it out of my sight! Throw it out of the window!). At this moment, Berg creates one of the opera's greatest climaxes with sequences of Bild motives that result in a

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62 Apparently there are other paintings of Lulu which are not present on stage. The Painter mentions the sale of her portrait as a Dancer in the second scene of Act I, and in this scene the Marquis refers to a portrait of Lulu standing as Eve. None of these are shown in the opera, however.

63 Boa, Sexual Circus, 91.

12-tone chord, consisting of a superimposition of four initial chords of the Bild motive transposed at a minor third (Ex. 9).

The most dramatic feature of this passage is the buildup of expectations created by the characters present in the scene (Alwa, Schigolch, Countess Geschwitz, and Lulu). This is offset by the chord’s falling apart in the next measures, an event which marks Lulu’s rejection of the portrait. The 12-tone chord is reduced to nine notes in measure 915; then six in measure 917; and finally to just three notes in measure 919. This point in the music designates the beginning of Alwa’s aria, an idealization of beauty and youth that no longer exist. In Schigolch’s words, “Das alles ist mit dem Kehrichtwagen gefahren” (all that has gone with the garbage truck). In this sense, by peeling away the layers of the 12-tone chord, Berg emphasizes Lulu’s final confrontation with her own identity and the realization that, when all the masks of her past are gone, she is only a prostitute.

Arguably, this has been her role throughout the opera. In Act 1, while married to Dr. Goll, she maintains a relationship with Dr. Schön and initiates another one with the Painter. After Dr. Goll’s death, she marries the Painter but continues her affairs with Dr. Schön and, presumably, with Schigolch, her former “guardian.” While married to Dr. Schön in Act 2, she receives an array of lovers, including Alwa, Dr. Schön’s

Lulu
Was ist es denn?

Alwa
Lassen Sie Mal sein. Mein Gott, das

haben Sie denn da?

Bild (P-3)
EXAMPLE 9. (continued)
son. In the first scene of Act 3, while "married" to Alwa, she maintains liaisons with the Marquis, the Athlete, and Schigolch. Finally, in the last scene she becomes a prostitute in London, where she receives three clients, the reincarnation of her former husbands. More than just part of a large-scale symmetry, the reincarnation of Lulu's dead husbands establishes a relationship between marriage and prostitution that was at the core of Berg's rendering of her character.  

Berg also perceived prostitution to be a form of slavery which was imposed on Lulu. In a sketch for three subsidiary characters (the Prince, the Manservant, and the Marquis), Berg wrote: "Faithfully led (Treulich geführt), whether it be into the slavery of marriage, the household, or the brothel." This sketch reflects not only the relationship between Lulu and these subsidiary characters, but also her experiences in the opera, from the glories of her youth in high society to the underworld of prostitution in London. Furthermore, it is clear that it was economic necessity that led Lulu into prostitution. In fact, in the London scene she represents any and all of the prostitutes in Victorian London, who, alongside the figure of Jack the Ripper, inspired Wedekind in the creation of his own "Monstertragedy." While discussing these women, especially the ones who fell victim to Jack the Ripper, Judith Walkowitz observed that "economic need forced [them] to take the streets on the night of their deaths ... These were economically desperate women, who violated their 'womanhood' for the price of a night's lodging, and for whom the wages of sin was death."

However, Lulu's reaction to the reappearance of her portrait plays a significant role in the events that follow and is perhaps the most tragic event in the final scene. In the ensuing quartet, the other characters present in the scene, gazing at her portrait, express their perception of what Lulu represents. For Alwa, seeing Lulu's portrait makes clear the cause of his misfortunes, thus restoring his sense of self-respect. His aria recalls his memories of Lulu's former beauty and the power of her sexuality over him. Schigolch expresses his "commodity" view of women: "Man muß es annageln für unsere Kundschaft" (We must hang it up for our clients). In essence, he consummates the Marquis's threat of using Lulu's portrait as a means for selling her body. While Countess

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64 I discuss the implications of the relationship between marriage and prostitution elsewhere. See my "Portraying Lulu," 53-98.

65 ÖNB, MS: F21 Berg 28/vi, fol. 11r. For a discussion with a transcription and translation of this sketch, see Hall, A View of Berg's "Lulu," 71-75. "Treulich geführt" refers to the opening words of the wedding march in the third act of Wagner's Lohengrin, which Berg quotes at the end of the Prince's duet with Alwa (I/iii, mm. 1143-45).

Geschwitz's initial reaction expresses her artistic inclination, she later transmutes the portrait into an angelic vision, an object of desire and illusion. For each character the portrait is a mirror of him or her self, but for Lulu it only reminds her of a past from which she has "fallen."

At a deeper level, their reactions to the portrait reinforce a sense of "otherness" between Lulu and her portrait. Unable to withstand her friends' praising the portrait and their memories of her glorious past, she goes downstairs to fetch a client and, as she leaves, she sings a prophetic: "Ich bring mich um" (I'll kill myself), which is set to another symbolic motive, the Erdgeist fourths. This is the same motive that she sings when Jack the Ripper stabs her at the end of the scene (Ex. 10).

Most significantly, Berg sets her death cry to the second 12-tone chord of the scene, which consists of three transpositions of the Erdgeist motive. This time, however, the chord is attacked without preparation, undoubtedly for dramatic purposes. Like the 12-tone chord accompanying Lulu's rejection of her portrait, Berg partitions the three Erdgeist motives of the second 12-tone chord in parallel fifths transposed at the tritone (Ex. 11). The striking structural and symbolic significance of this 12-tone chord and the one shown in Example 9 suggest a close relationship between loss of identity and death.

Attempting Reconciliation

As we have seen, Berg's presentation of Lulu's portrait as an emblem of her identity unfolds in three stages: from an initial ascription in Act 1, to Lulu's appropriation of her own image in Act 2, and finally her strong rejection in Act 3. I would like to examine yet another source that reveals Berg's final attempt to associate Lulu with her portrait during the quartet in the last scene by transferring some of Schigolch's lines to Lulu, as shown in Table 2. Note that Berg gives Lulu the line that expresses her sense of self-identity as based on her portrait.

This textual change is not present in Friedrich Cerha's edition of Act 3, however. Because the sketches of the opera were not available to

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67 There are, in fact, three 12-tone chords in the opera. The first one occurs in the third scene of Act 1 and the other two appear in the final scene of the opera. Although the first appearance of this aggregate set establishes the symbolism for its return in the final scene, it is not as climactic. It appears when Alwa dreams about writing an opera based on Lulu's life and the tragic end of her husbands. While Alwa alludes to the death of Lulu's first husband, Dr. Goll, Berg unfolds the first 12-tone chord from sequences of parallel thirds, which are originally associated with that husband (Act 1, scene 3, mm. 1100-104). This chord thus represents his tragic fate. Because it is a result of a decrescendo arriving at a pianissimo, however, it is anti-climactic and almost unnoticeable.

68 The page containing this text is reprinted in Perle, Operas, vol. 2: "Lulu," Illustration
scholars at the time he worked on it, he had to use Wedekind’s text to complete the vocal parts. George Perle has made the following comment about Cerha’s completion of the third act:

Since the copy of the libretto containing the missing text of mm. 980–1002 was not known to Cerha at the time, he was faced with the additional task here of finding words for the parts of Lulu, Countess Geschwitz, and Schigolch. In his musical solution Cerha followed Berg’s own practice of doubling various linear details that appear in the orchestral part. The result is eminently successful, an ecstatic high point in which the unfolding of the drama is suspended as the past is momentarily recovered for each of the four characters as they look upon the portrait. The problem of the missing text, however, was not resolved for the part of Lulu, a deficiency that can be easily corrected now that we know the text Berg himself had prepared for the “sketched in” concluding section of the quartet.69

Perle rightly points out that Cerha’s version leaves Lulu’s part unresolved. In light of the discussion above, if Berg’s textual change were kept, Lulu’s line “Ich kann mit Selbstbewuβtsein sagen: Das war ich einmal!” (I can say with self-awareness: I was that once!) would make the overall relationship between her and her portrait consistent throughout the opera. However, the fact that she can say with “Selbstbewuβtsein” (literally, self-awareness) that the portrait represents who she once was does not give her much comfort. The rejection of an image that was once so central to her existence suggests a collapse of identity. This collapse creates, in fact, a dialectic opposition between her identity and

Nein, nein, nein, nein...

Richtet sich ganz starr auf und stürzt dann plötzlich zur Tür von Lulus Kammer, an der sie mit aller Kraft rüttelt.

selfhood. While Lulu continues expressing her sexuality, or her selfhood, as before (as mentioned earlier, her clients in the London scene are the reincarnation of her former husbands), the most significant change in her character is her physical appearance, in other words her identity. Thus, because of this transformation, her sexuality becomes overexposed, which conforms to the fact that she works as a prostitute. In a sense, she expresses her selfhood without the support of her identity. By losing her beauty, she loses the only element that guarantees her survival. Teresa Stratas, a leading Lulu singer, has remarked intuitively that the Lulu of the London scene is already dead. When Jack the Ripper appears later in the scene, he only finishes the job. In this light, as an emblem of Lulu’s identity, her portrait and the Bild motive become a symbol of both her fortunes and ultimate demise.

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70 For a detailed discussion of similar cases of loss of identity in contemporary novels and its relation to the dialectic between identity and selfhood, see Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 140–68.

71 Teresa Stratas, comment made on occasion of the Metropolitan Opera’s production of *Lulu, Live from the MET*, Public Broadcast System, 20 December 1980.
The most controversial aspect of Alban Berg's opera *Lulu*—and one that has generated considerable criticism—is the composer's conception of the protagonist's character. Judith Lochhead, for example, argues that it is impossible to trace "a single, continuous feature that defines Lulu's personality." However, Berg offsets the "typological" element in Lulu's characterization by assigning her complex levels of interaction with her portrait, which is continuously present and symbolizes her sense of self-identity and her perception by others. Thus he changed several aspects of Wedekind's plays and created musical structures to represent Lulu as an individual and an object of desire. The most important of these devices is the music associated with Lulu's portrait, which marks significant dramatic and structural moments in the opera.

Berg's extensive annotations in the opera's sketches, his copies of the plays, and the *Particell* bring to light the significance of Lulu's portrait with regard to her characterization. The portrait and its leitmotivic set pervade the opera, serving multiple functions according to the different dramatic situations. More than just an objective representation, Lulu's portrait is a constant reminder of who Lulu is in the opera. On the basis of this evidence, this study demonstrates that, by engaging the long-established literary tradition that associates women's identities with their reflected images, Berg makes the opera pivot around the portrait music, effecting a transformation in Lulu's sense of self-identity.