C Major and Musical Expressionism in Berg’s *Lulu*

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ABSTRACT

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A thesis presented to the Department of Music

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Although much of the music in Alban Berg’s 1935 opera Lulu is comprised of twelve-tone rows, the composer included elements of tonal harmony as musical signifiers, a common component in Berg’s serial works, which were described by René Leibovitz as, “the most radical way of creating a firm bond between Schönberg’s work and the past.” One such harmonic element is C, which appears in the opera as a sustained pedal, as the root of a major third or major triad, and as a diatonic key in Berg’s adaptation of Frank Wedekind’s lute song, Konfession, as a prostitution theme in Act III. C major follows Lulu from the household to the brothel; Berg uses the chord at moments when Lulu’s sexual promiscuity and impoverished upbringing lead to her characterization as basic, even primitive, playing on the historical perception of C major as a basic, fundamental chord in tonal music. Chiefly, Berg uses C major as a tool for social critique, as its associations with perceived primitivism ultimately highlight the hypocrisies of naturalist philosophy and the bourgeoisie in a similar manner as used by expressionist artists of the time, such as Ernst Kirchner and George Grosz. This paper examines Berg’s use of C major in Lulu and its implications, drawing meaning from Berg’s own conceptions of tonal and twelve-tone music, as well as from the philosophies of expressionist artists and writers in post-WWI northern Europe.
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Table 1: Key Progression of the Interlude Variations. 35
In his *Philosophy of New Music*, Theodor Adorno considers the historical relevance of the twelve-tone compositional method of Schoenberg and his Second Viennese School. To Adorno, compositional styles are inseparable from societal guidelines, which change over time: “No chord is simply ‘in itself’ false, because no chord exists in itself and because each chord bears in itself the whole, indeed the whole of history.”¹ The composer is then not a free agent, but is confined either to react to society and the era in which he lives in his compositions, or to attempt to push beyond it. Schoenberg’s twelve-tone compositional technique rebelled against the conventions of harmonic tonality and took the fixation with dissonance in the Romantic Era to the extreme, shifting away from the chord to the individual note.

“The more a chord is dissonant, the more it comprises in itself tones differentiated from each other and potent in their differentiatedness, the more […] each individual tone acquires in its harmonic simultaneity the character of a ‘voice.’ The ascendancy of dissonance seems to destroy the rational ‘logical’ connections within tonality, the simple triadic relations. Yet dissonance is more rational than consonance insofar as it articulates the relationship of sounds, however complex, contained in it instead of buying their unity at the price of the annihilation of the partial contained within it, that is through a ‘homogeneous’ resonance. Dissonance, and its related categories of melodic composition based on ‘dissonant’ intervals are the veritable bearers of depositional expression.”²

Twelve-tone compositions, although designed as closed systems within themselves, nevertheless refer to musical traditions and contemporary philosophical paradigms. The inversion of rows echoes the “inverted fugue,” the retrograde row imitates the “crab” canon, and

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² Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*, 49.
the possibilities of row transpositions and row derivation ensure that each piece will have a unique sound, which Adorno compares to the early music practice of modal compositions. The twelve-tone system allows the composer to exert the appearance of complete control over his work, as he is responsible for the choice of the fundamental row itself, as well as its derivations within the work. While its technique is indebted to musical traditions, the philosophy behind twelve-tone music championed human reason over nature; the closed system asserts itself as impervious to influence from fate and inevitability, identified in tonal music as the foreseeable arrival at an anticipated conclusion. “Conscious disposal over musical material is both the emancipation of the human being from the constraint of nature in music and the subordination of nature to human purposes.”

The dramatic works of Alban Berg reflect the composer’s full understanding of the philosophy behind twelve-tone technique and its relation to tonal language. In his essay “Why Is Schoenberg’s Music So Difficult To Analyze?” Berg maintains that successful use of twelve-tone composition relies on a full understanding of the methods perfected by the masters of the past. Often characterized as more “accessible” than Schoenberg, even in the composer’s lifetime, Berg’s compositions deviate from strict serialism and look backwards at tonal harmony; the composer infuses his works with tonal elements, choosing his source rows and creating derivations with an eye towards voice leading and chord possibilities. This is especially true of his opera Lulu, which is a critique of society in the bourgeois era, particularly its treatment of women and the lower class. The opera takes a cynical look at the fate of a young woman who becomes embroiled in bourgeois society, only to be forcibly ejected from it when her husbands

3 Adorno, Philosophy of New Music, 53.
die after realizing that her free sexuality does not conform to their image of a submissive chaste wife. The opera is rife with tonal allusions that Berg deploys as musical signifiers adding additional layers of meaning onto Frank Wedekind’s plays *Earth Spirit* and *Pandora’s Box*, which provided the textual basis for the opera. Of particular interest for this paper is the use of C as a major chord, which appears at moments in the opera where there is special emphasis on the base, the primitive, and the animalistic aspects of the drama and the characters. Berg’s treatment of the chord often parallels the critiques of bourgeois society popular with expressionist artists of his time. Although the scope of this project is limited, an overview of the way Berg deploys symbolic aspects of C Major in *Lulu* provides an excellent lens with which to view Berg’s social critique and his philosophy regarding the changes going on within music and the culture that surrounded him.

I

Before looking at the opera itself, it is necessary to examine some of Berg’s earlier serial works in order to understand the relationship between tonal and twelve-tone technique that Berg developed in his compositions. Berg’s first serial composition, a setting of Theodor Storm’s poem *Schliesse mir die Augen Beide*, directly compares the two techniques. Berg composed two settings of *Schliesse mir die Augen Beide*, “one old and one entirely new”: one in 1900, written using tonal centers and romantic harmonic progressions, and the other in 1925, composed using the all-interval twelve-tone row discovered by his student, F. H. Klein. In the preface to the

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6 Willi Reich’s 1937 biography of Berg gives the composition date for Lied I as 1907 rather than 1900, and the date for Lied II as 1926 rather than 1925. These dates are themselves uncertain. In a 1930 article by Reich, 1900 is given as the date for Lied I. Berg’s correspondences with Anton
1930 Universal Edition of the two songs, Berg explains that the differences between the two songs were intended to show, “the enormous distance covered as music has gone from tonal composition to the ‘method of composing with twelve Tones which related only one with another,’ from the C-Major triad to the ‘Mutterakkord.’” The 1925 version of Schliesse mir die Augen Beide was Berg’s first venture into serial composition, and the first of several times he used the all-interval Klein row as a row source.

The first of the two settings (1900) is a short nine-bar song in the key of C Major. The song begins with an open octave C in the left hand of the piano, which is repeated in m. 3, and a middle voice C is sustained through the first three measures of the song. The singer’s first phrase cadences from a Db to C in m. 4, which is reinforced by imitation in the right hand of the piano. After harmonic motion to the subdominant in mm. 5-7, the vocalist finishes her final phrase on C in m. 8, then reiterates the last few words, “mein ganzes Herz,” in a strong V-I cadence with a B lead-in to the final C. The piano harmony in m. 8 begins with a dominant 6/4 chord, which leads to a V 6/4 – 5/3 progression, then a dominant 6/4 – 5/3 ending in m. 9.

The second version of Schliesse mir (1925) is built on the Klein row, the twelve-tone, all-interval row discovered by Berg’s pupil, Fritz Heinrich Klein. The song makes use of the row in

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[9] After using the Klein row in Schliesse mir die Augen Beide, Berg used it as a direct source for the Lyric Suite. He returned to it when composing Lulu; the Basic Series of the opera is indebted to the Klein row.
its original form, as well as a permutation created using retrograde intervals of the two hexachords. This permutation is equivalent to the Klein row in I8 save for the exchange of the two hexachords; the last six notes of the derivation are the first six notes of I8, and vice versa (see Fig. 1).

![Figure 1: The Klein Row (top) and its hexachord derivation (bottom), used in Lied II.](image)

The vocal line in Lied II is simply the original form of the Klein row, repeated five times over the course of the song. The piano line mainly consists of the original form of the Klein row, presented in both prime and retrograde forms. In mm. 11-13, the right hand of the piano plays the hexachord derivation once through. The left hand of the piano breaks from the row entirely in mm. 12-15, playing arpeggiated tone clusters that use material from row permutations, but adhere to specific interval sets more than they do to any single row. The song ends with a

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11 Perle claims that the harmonic accompaniment in mm. 12-15, the clusters of [G: F#, A#, C#], [E: A, Bb], and [D: Eb, Ab] (notation is in place to distinguish the stacked notes; notes separated by comma are stacked on each other, notes separated by colon are part of the arpeggiation), is “apparently freely derived from P10.” (Perle, 1985) However, Perle’s explanation requires an extensive re-ordering of P10 and does not fully account for [D: Eb, Ab]. A simpler explanation is that Berg selected these note clusters from different row permutations; [G, C#, F#] and [E, Bb, Ab] from P10, and [D, Eb, Ab] from the hexachord derivation P5. Berg most likely selected
twelve-note “Mutterakkord,” which Berg contrasted with the C major triad in his foreword to the Universal Edition of Schliesse mir. Like the major triad, the Mutterakkord is a place of stability in twelve-tone compositions; Berg used three twelve-note chords in Lulu, one of which will be discussed in this paper.

Although Lied II is based on the Klein row, and was described by Berg as his “first attempt at strict twelve-tone (row-) composition,” in a letter to Anton Webern, Berg’s version of serialism can hardly be called “strict,” especially when compared with works by Webern himself.\(^{12}\) The arpeggiated tone clusters in mm. 12-15 in the left hand clearly show a preference for interval sounds rather than strict adherence to the use of the complete row. When he uses the complete row, Berg takes advantage of the tonal properties inherent to the Klein row; the right hand of the piano opens with an Ab-Db fifth, notes 6 and 7 of the Klein row, a gesture similar to an opening triad in a tonal work.\(^{13}\) Even when Berg does not use the intervals of the Klein row to create tonal gestures, his compositional choices reflect an attention to voice-leading. In the first seven measures of Lied II, the notes of the Klein row are distributed between the two hands of the piano in order to maintain a stable top voice in the right hand, which moves in half- and whole-steps and stays within the Gb-Bb range, creating a voice-leading effect.


\(^{13}\) This particular fifth appears in Lulu as the “doorbell chord,” used frequently to herald the arrival or departure of characters.
Even the twelve-note *Mutterakkord*, the serial antithesis of the C major chord, is used in a manner reminiscent of tonal compositional convention. The *Mutterakkord* begins as an 11-note chord with C as the root in the last measure of the piece before being completed by a low F. Fig. 2 shows the stacked *Mutterakkord* and the bass line progression F-Bb-C-F in the final measures, a gesture so perfectly resembling an authentic cadence that it is difficult to believe that the classically-trained composer would have been ignorant to the similarities. Thus, although Berg speaks of the *Schliesse mir* lieder as two works with “enormous distance” between them, it is as easy to identify similarities between the two songs as it is to identify differences.

Berg’s persistent use of the Klein row in his serial compositions also reflects his penchant for including allusions to tonality within twelve-tone composition. The properties built into the Klein row lend themselves well to harmonic gestures; I have already called attention to Berg’s use of fifths and minor seconds to create harmonic motion in Lied II of *Schliesse mir*. Klein himself differentiated his rows from other twelve-tone rows, describing them as *Modell* rather than using Schoenberg’s preferred term *Reihe*, and proclaiming the ideal all-interval row as
“based upon the exigencies of a primitive melodic arch.”

The Klein row has within it three existing chords; two minor seventh chords, one in each hexachord, and (3) a diminished seventh, made up of notes 1, 6, 7, and 12, the notes whose position remains unchanged in the hexachord derivation (see Fig. 1). Berg’s exploration of tonal properties of serial composition continued in his treatment of the Klein row in the Lyric Suite, where he arranged the row in two ways that further emphasize tonality, (1) organizing the hexachords as a series of perfect fifths, imitating the hierarchical progression of the circle of fifths, and (2) arranging the two hexachords into two scales, one all white-notes and one all black-notes, seen in Fig. 3.

![Klein row re-ordering into fifths (top) and scalar (bottom).](image)

Within Berg’s lifetime, critics described his music as more “accessible” than Schoenberg’s, a characterization he despised, according to Adorno. This characterization continues within modern musicology; within the composers of the Second Viennese School, Berg’s music is often seen as a deviation from Schönberg’s strict rules of serialist composition. In René Leibovitz’s study, *Schönberg et son école*, Berg’s use of tonal properties in his serial works is described as “the most radical way of creating a firm bond between Schönberg’s work

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14 Ashby, “Of ‘Modell-Typen’ and ‘Reihenformen’,” f. 76.
and the past.”16 However, while works such as the second setting of Schliesse mir die Augen Beide and the first movement of the Lyric Suite divorce themselves from the dualism of tonal composition versus twelve-tone composition, showing the two rather as different points on a spectrum, Berg’s own characterization of Schliesse mir shows that he considered tonality and harmonics to be part of the “past” while twelve-tone composition signaled the “present.” I will keep Berg’s words in mind when examining his use of C major in Lulu. Various occurrences of C major in the opera provide an excellent example of how Berg of contrasts past and present; specifically, the chord is used purposefully to highlight the hypocrisies inherent in the naturalist ideals of the bourgeois elite, placing Berg in the company of expressionist artists of his time, and revealing the composer to be a master of social critique.

C major appears in Lulu in many different forms: at times as a sustained pedal point, at times as a diatonic key, at times as a full major triad or just a C-E major third, the last of these configurations forming the basis for the first of the opera’s three twelve-note chords (in the theater scene of Act I). Douglas Jarman calls attention to the C major triad as a connection to Berg’s earlier opera, Wozzeck, an interpretation whose meaning George Perle seems to call into question.17 In Wozzeck, the pitch C and the C major triad indicate money, or the lack of money, as the components of the C major triad appear prominently in an occurrence of the motive associated with Wozzeck’s “Wir arme Leut” (“we poor people”). A C major triad is sustained in the orchestra as Wozzeck gives Marie his meager earnings in Act II/Scene I.18

Commenting on Jarman’s association of the passages in question with Wozzeck, George Perle remarks, “These two quotations make their mark by their total irrelevance; they insist on

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connections where in fact there is only coincidence.” While Perle may be correct in his assertion that use of the C major triad in Lulu is not a direct reference to C major in Wozzeck, his dismissal of the connection is perhaps too hasty, as C major in Lulu has definite connections to its appearances in Wozzeck, the Lyric Suite, and Schliesse mir die Augen Beide. In Berg’s instrumental pieces, C major represents the most basic, fundamental structure in tonal writing; the keys on the circle of fifths can be said to be built out of C major, their sharped and flatted key signatures being alterations of C’s fundamental purity. It is no small coincidence that Berg chose C major as the tonal equivalent of the all-interval twelve-tone Klein row. In Berg’s operas, in which rows and pitch classes refer distinctly to specific characters and thematic elements, appearances of C major continue his classification of the key as representative of basic, fundamental elements; these characteristics are translated into references to social themes such as class and primitivism. In Wozzeck, the association of C major with money relates it to Wozzeck’s poverty, the central conflict in the opera and the main cause of Wozzeck’s undoing. The title character is a poverty-stricken man who fights against, but ultimately falls victim to, the suggestions of immorality and barbarism inherent to his class, which are placed on him by characters such as the Captain. As in Wozzeck, the presence of a recurring C major and low C pedal in Lulu characterizes Lulu’s behavior as primitive and at times even barbaric, characterizations that consistently “other” her from bourgeois society and permanently root her in “low” culture, represented by the jazz theater where Lulu dances and her eventual work as a prostitute on the London streets. In the opera, Lulu has relationships with a series of suitors and husbands, all of which come to an end when they learn of her past and present affairs. Her first husband, the medical specialist, dies of a heart attack in a paroxysm of rage; her second, the

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painter, commits suicide; and her third, Dr. Schön, ultimately falls victim to his “persecution mania,” fueled by Lulu’s extra-marital escapades. She is violently ejected from bourgeois society when she shoots Dr. Schön, refusing to acquiesce to his demand that she kill herself for inviting amorous suitors into their house. Following her escape from prison, Lulu is blackmailed into prostitution—her clients portrayed by the same singers who played her dead husbands—and she is murdered by Jack the Ripper, an act famously described by Karl Kraus at the premiere of Pandora’s Box as “the revenge of a world of men, who dares to avenge itself for its own guilt.”

This paper will examine the presence of C major as it appears at the death of Lulu’s husbands, the theater scene where she dances for Schön’s fiancée, and her eventual prostitution.

II

Sketches for the Prologue to Lulu reveal that Berg’s initial conception for the beginning of the opera strongly leaned toward C as a key area. As Douglass Green points out, the first twelve notes of Berg’s sketch opened with a G-C fifth of Basic Cell III and closed with an arpeggiated diminished-seventh chord on B. Berg had also included a trilled C-E major third which would have continued from the Prologue to the raising of the curtain on the first scene, effectively beginning the drama in C major. While the opening C-G fifth was lowered in final version of the Prologue, there are nevertheless strong C chords in the final Prologue, present in one of two tonal centers—C major and F major—of the Circus Music (itself related to the C major of the Paris casino scene of Act III, scene I, in which Wedekind’s comparison of the world

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20 Perle, The Operas of Alban Berg, 60.
of the audience to a menagerie is most evident). In contrast to the Basic Series that opens the final version of the Prologue, the steady major chords at the base of the Circus Music stand out in sharp distinction. Written after the majority of the opera was completed, the Prologue music contains many allusions to music that returns later in the opera. Berg immediately sets up a dualistic contrast between tonality and twelve-tone music, one that is explored throughout the opera.

In Act I, C major is primarily associated with Lulu’s degenerate past and its disastrous consequences for her various partners, all of whom were matched with her by Dr. Schön. Various iterations of C appear at the deaths of both of Lulu’s husbands, as well as in the first appearance of Schigolch, Lulu’s possible father and a character who personifies primitivism. Both husbands meet their demise after learning of Lulu’s past and present infidelities, shattering their ideas of her as a submissive wife. This idealistic fantasy is held by many male characters in the opera, perpetuated by the constant presence of Lulu’s portrait and the so-called “Bild motive.” Lulu’s portrait is consistently the object of male gaze, and the Bild motive signifies when characters are thinking of it rather than of Lulu herself. Lulu does not self-identify with her portrait, which is made especially clear in Act III, scene II, when its presence causes her great distress, a sentiment not shared by Schigolch and Alwa. Thus, a dichotomy is established between Lulu as the crafted fantasy of other characters, and Lulu qua Lulu, her “true nature,” which is inextricably tied to her past and her relationship to Schigolch, who was her caretaker until she was appropriated under Dr. Schön’s care at age twelve. Because of its associations with fundamentalism, a distorted view of naturalism, and even primitivism, C major is one of many tools Berg uses to explicate Lulu’s childhood under Schigolch’s protection. Their relationship, and its effects on Lulu’s character, is developed in Act I, when various bourgeoisie characters
find themselves confronted with her behaviors and actions that upend their comfortable fantasies of bourgeois married life.

The Medical Specialist Dr. Goll’s death is the first of the opera’s many deaths, and is heralded by a C-E tremolo at the beginning of the Melodrama in Act I, scene I, m. 196. In the scene immediately preceding the Melodrama, the painter, irresistibly drawn to Lulu, chases her around the studio and eventually overtakes her, while her reactions range from repulsion (“Gehen Sie an Ihre Arbeit,” “Bleiben Sie mir vom Leib!”), to detachment from the situation (“Gott schütze Polen!” “Ich liebte einmal einen Studenten mit hundertundfünfundsechzig Schmissen…”). Although Lulu’s encounter with the painter hardly likens her to a female Don Juan, as critics have been wont to characterize her, the mere sight of his wife in an act of barbarism with another man is enough for the Medical Specialist to suffer a fatal heart attack. During the scuffle as the Medical Specialist bangs on the door of the Artist’s studio, a C-E tremolo sounds and is sustained until the door flies open and the Medical Specialist insultingly compares the two to animals, “Ihr Hunde!” (“You Dogs!”) before collapsing. After his exclamation, the C-E tremolo progresses onto a series of thirds that encompass all twelve tones over the course of the melodrama. Although here the sequence of thirds is presented successively, they look ahead to the twelve-note Mutterakkord build on thirds with C-E at its base in Act I, scene III (as Alwa recalls the Medical Specialist’s death). The Melodrama ends in m. 257 with a roughly scalar descent from Bb down to C. Ten of the twelve tones are included in this descent (the two left out, F# and G#, are present in the sustained trill), and the tones are

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grouped into black and white notes, similar to Berg’s reordering of the Klein row in the first movement of the *Lyric Suite*. Thus, two different presentations of C open and close the Melodrama, major third relations and scalar relations, both emphasizing the major scale and the tonal possibilities of twelve-tone composition.

III

A notable feature of the Melodrama is the addition of repetitive percussion over the C-E tremolo. Timpani, bass drum, and snare drum all play canonical *Hauptrhythmus* patterns, as shown in Fig. 4.

![Figure 4: Hauptrhythmus, Melodrama.](image)

The timpani, the only pitched percussive instrument, plays the *Hauptrhythmus* on C and E, strengthening the major third tremolo beneath it. The strong percussive element in the beginning of the Melodrama creates a sound reminiscent of tribal drumming patterns, which, in connection to the Medical Specialist’s outcry, suggests that adultery of this sort is an act more suited to primitive barbarians than any sort of behavior sanctioned by the bourgeoisie code of ethics. Berg used the rhythm of the *Hauptrhythmus* in a similar manner in *Wozzeck*, where it connects Marie’s murder to Wozzeck’s madness, put upon him as a consequence of his poverty. In Lulu, the *Hauptrhythmus* carries similar associations, framing the deaths of Lulu’s husbands as inevitable results of Lulu’s inherent primitivism.

In Act I, scene II, further variations of this basic rhythmic pattern accompany the events leading up to the Artist’s offstage suicide and the subsequent discovery of his body. The
Monoritmica, which leads up to the death of the Artist, contains many different forms of the Hauptrhythmus, in both prime and retrograde form.\textsuperscript{24}

![Figure 5: Hauptrhythmus, Monoritmica.](image)

The continued use of the Hauptrhythmus during the death of Lulu’s second husband links the two deaths through associations with a perceived primitivism associated with Lulu’s background and behavior. As with the Medical Specialist’s death, the Monoritmica of the Painter’s death scene is peppered with sustained C pedal points, further connecting the Hauptrhythmus with the pitch C. The Hauptrhythmus, and the C major tonality that pervades it during the deaths of the Medical Specialist and the Artist, thus becomes a musical representation of primitivism, a theme that emerges forcefully in the percussion canons that also accompany those events.

In this respect Lulu parallels closely the exploration of primitivism in the works of expressionist artists of the time, most notably Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, in whose paintings and woodcuts the veneer of polite bourgeois society is undermined by crude, primitive techniques. Kirchner was a member of the artists group Die Brücke, which sought to liberate expressions of sexuality from the rigid cultural codes established by the German upper middle class. In the first decade of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, Kirchner began creating prints made from wood-carvings, which he would continue to do until after the end of World War I, including a series depicting Berlin streetwalkers from 1913-1916.\textsuperscript{25} These prints represented people and townscapes with strong


crude lines and stark contrasts between the black lines and the white background. Critics noticed similarities between Kirchner’s portraits and ancient tribal masks, which Claude Lévi-Strauss argued was a visual nod to the masking people participate in when they adopt societal roles, or as he put it, when a face “receives its social dignity and mystical significance.”

Kirchner intended his woodcarvings to highlight hypocrisies within bourgeoisie society, as in works in which primitive technique served to undercut his subject’s formal dress and posture. In *Der Verkauf des Schattens*, (Appendix I, Ill. 1) Kirchner depicts a man selling his shadow, witnessed by several figures in the background. The man is dressed in a modern suit, and stands upright, tipping his hat to his shadow, which hunches before him. The modern clothing of the subject and background figures is contrasted by Kirchner’s primitive woodcarving methods, as is the formality indicated by the man’s clothing and posture. This print was the first of a woodcut series illustrating Peter, who for Kirchner was, “an individual with an existential awareness beyond the common bourgeoisie, who suffered scorn and rejection because of this awareness,” in the words of Kirchner scholar Sherwin Simmons. This particular print shows the first step of Peter’s awareness, which Kirchner represents by illustrating Peter as two distinct parts, differentiated by the purple shadow and the harsh gash of red separating the two figures. This portrayal is similar to the multiple facets of Lulu’s being that Berg highlights with musical signifiers such as the *Bild* motive.

Kirchner’s woodcuts included depictions of nudity and sexuality, an example of which is a poster he created for his MUIM (Modern Instruction in Painting) Institute (Appendix. I, Ill. 2). The poster depicts a topless woman smelling a flower with eyes closed, a very sensual act.

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27 Simmons, “Split Identity,” 419.
28 Sherwin Simmons “Split Identity,” 418.
Several nude images are found in the poster: the woman’s naked breasts are emphasized by jagged patterns and dark nipples, and in her hair is a piece of jewelry featuring the figure of a nude dancer. Thus the viewer encounters a juxtaposition of the sensuous act and the unpolished presentation of the nude female form. This poster was one of several expressionist works that confronted viewers with stark images of female nudity in an attempt to criticize the modern corset and put forward images of liberated female sexuality. These images were widely censored: Kirchner’s poster caused Anton von Werner, director of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, to write a letter to the minister of religious and educational affairs lamenting the “shameless” image, writing, “‘this weed overgrows and chokes all healthy life and always diminishes us in the name of the freedom of art.’” As Simmons describes, “the naked body, directly experienced outside established cultural codes and spaces, was presented to the public as a primitive source for a "new generation of creators and a new audience." Simmons goes on the describe Die Brücke’s ideology and methods in the early 1900’s:

“Die Brücke's development over the next five years [after 1907] in Dresden can be seen as an act of resistance to these trends [of machination] through the creation of a bohemian space that emphasized the passionate and unique mark of the individual hand and the desire for a freedom outside existing economic, social, and cultural institutions. Passive members could participate at a distance through contemplation of works of art that depicted the bohemian life played out within environments modeled on the perceived "primitivism" of cultures such as those of Palau and Cameroon.”

Likewise, Berg capitalizes on the perceived primitivism of those “othered” by bourgeois society; this is especially noticeable in the character Schigolch and the music associated with him. Schigolch is a man of indecipherable age who may or may not be Lulu’s biological father,

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29 Simmons, “Ernst Kirchner’s Streetwalkers,” 122.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
but is nevertheless inextricably bound up in her earlier life. He is a keen survivalist, one of the few characters left alive at the end of the opera, adding an air of timelessness and permanence to his character. In the Prologue, Schigolch and Lulu are described as belly-crawlers (Lulu is a serpent, Schigolch as a reptile), and similarly, Schigolch’s Serial Trope snakes upwards in a roughly chromatic pattern. As George Perle says, “Schigolch’s Serial Trope, a symbol of Lulu’s background, is consistent with his primordial nature: in terms of its segmental content it is equivalent to the semitonal scale, and thus is a representation not only of Lulu’s origins but also of the ultimate source of the tone material itself.” Perle characterizes Schigolch’s Serial Trope as “really the basic series of the opera […] basic in its signification as well,” aligning the primitive character of Schigolch with music that signifies fundamentality. Thus, when Berg coincides C major with Schigolch’s Serial Trope in Act I, scene II, it further establishes the key’s association with primitivism, making it thematically similar to the C major that represented the fundamental chord of tonality in Lied I of Schliesse mir die Augen Beide. A C major triad first occurs in Scene II occurs when Schigolch makes his first appearance, visiting Lulu in the Artist’s house. Initially, Schigolch is referred to as a “beggar,” a characterization that is partially true, but during his subsequent conversation with Lulu the audience is able to glean a few specifics of their relationship.

33 The only other character described as a belly-crawler is Countess Geschwitz, who is characterized as a crocodile. Although she carries a distinctive title, the Countess isothered by characters in the opera because of her lesbianism and its associations with sexual deviancy. Even Lulu has no sympathy for the countess, separating her from natural women, “You are no human thing—not like others. Not enough for a man’s anatomy. And you’ve too much brain in your skull to be a natural woman.” Emphasis mine, in Jacobs, Lulu, 68.
In the measures before the major triad is sounded, Lulu and Schigolch both sing chromatic lines based on Schigolch’s Serial Trope (with octave separations, imitating Schigolch’s asthmatic wheezes). They are accompanied by echoing figures in the orchestra. Amidst this dense texture, the pedal C in m. 467 thus stands out as a constant prolonged sound. The major third, E, is continued from an imitation of Schigolch’s melody, prolonging the E with which he answers Lulu’s question, “How can you come to him—begging (anbettein)?” with, “But that’s just why I’ve come.” The G fifth completes the triad in m. 468, and the full C major triad is held while Schigolch asks Lulu for two hundred in cash, before changing his mind and asking for three hundred. Lulu’s tired line, “Bin ich müde…(Same old story…)” which closes out the C pedal, refers to a long relationship with Schigolch.

The chord is heard again in m. 531, when Schigolch leaves and Dr. Schön inquires about his visit, referring to him as Lulu’s father. Although it was clear during Schigolch’s visit that he and Lulu have a history (Schigolch is the first character to call Lulu by her correct name, referring to her as one would a child, “meine kleine Lulu.”), Schön’s label is the first explicit statement detailing that past relationship. The triad is again fully written out, with the G led

36 “Lulu” may not be the character’s birth name, but it is clearly the name she prefers and identifies herself with. (Leo Treitler speculates that the name is a reference to Lilith.) When the Painter calls her “Nelly” in Scene I, she corrects him, telling him her name is Lulu. Dr. Schön even says in his conversation with the painter that he does not know what her name really is. Schigolch using the name “Lulu” makes explicit that the two have a relationship that has spanned much longer than her relationships with most of the other characters in the opera.
into by F and Gb in the previous measure, an example of Berg’s use of voice leading as well as a reference to Schigolch’s chromatic trope. The C major chord is held through mm. 531-32, the only accompaniment to Schön’s question and Lulu’s answer, which together complete Schigolch’s Serial Trope. Consequently, the second iteration of C major relates to the first and expands the audience’s knowledge of Lulu’s background.

Subsequent appearances of C in Scene II call back to Schigolch’s relationship with Lulu, and its effect on her current marriage to the Artist. A pronounced C pedal sounds in the bass of the Monoritmica when Schön reveals Lulu’s past to the Artist. The association of the sustained C with themes of poverty and low class are especially poignant in the Monoritmica, since the Artist commits suicide upon learning of Lulu’s “true nature”; even the idea of Lulu as anything other than their imagined bourgeois wife is too much for her husbands to bear, as witnessed in the Medical Specialist’s Scene I death. In m. 716, a C pedal tone sounds when Dr. Schön alludes to Lulu’s disreputable past, telling the Artist, “With such a father as my Mignon has, I would say that she’s a marvel!” The C is prepared in quasi-cadential fashion by G, the fifth descent mimicking a tonal progression, and continues through to m. 720. In m. 718, the C pedal drops down an octave when the Artist replies confusedly, rising up again in m. 719 (accompanied by a solo saxophone, one of Berg’s symbols of lower society) when Schön reveals that Schigolch was just recently in the house. Dr. Schön’s melodic line again follows Schigolch’s Serial Trope (imitating the octave skips from Lulu and Schigolch’s earlier conversation), implying who Lulu’s father really is, and further connecting C major with Schigolch and Lulu’s disreputable past.

Another C pedal appears a short while later in m. 728, when Dr. Schön’s words begin to severely distress the Artist. Although Schön tells the Artist to “master [his] emotions” and “be
stronger,” the C pedal beneath him in the *Hauprhythmus* pattern suggests that he is being
disingenuous, and foreshadows the Artist’s death. Indeed, the Artist’s feeble attempt to discredit
Schön, “…geschworen hat sie bei dem Grabe ihrer Mutter… (She swore on her Mother’s
grave),” is immediately rebutted by Schön’s final revelation about Lulu’s past, “Sie habt ihre
Mutter nicht gekannt; geschwige das Grab…” The C pedal is sustained through Schön’s words
and the Painter’s reply, “O Gott! O Gott! O Gott!” which echoes Lulu’s cries in Scene I when the
painter advances on her, and precedes Schön’s cries when he is shot in Act II, scene I.

The C pedal continues through the entirety of the Artist’s death scene. In addition to
beginning the *Hauprhythmus* pattern on the low C pedal, Berg begins a C pedal at the moment
when the door to the room containing the Painter’s corpse springs open, in m. 833. The C pedal
is sustained until m. 850, while a G chord of two stacked tritones plays the *Hauprhythmus* above
it. Thus, through use of a sustained C pedal tone, Berg adeptly extends the C major triad that
appeared so prominently during Schigolch’s visit through all of the dramatic events of Scene II.
Schigolch’s Serial Trope appears many times during the *Monoritmica*, which is fitting since his
appearance at the Artist’s house began the chain of events that led to the Artist’s suicide.
However, the appearance of a low C pedal—recalling the precise moment when Schigolch asks
Lulu for money—suggest that the disclosure of Lulu’s lower class upbringings are just as much
of a fatal blow to the Painter, who previously assumed he had married a bourgeois doctor’s wife,
with only that as her sexual past. Including a sustained C major triad and C pedal, both of which
stand out against the dense texture of overlapping rows and non-tonal chords in the dramatic
events of Scene II, Berg outlines a picture of Lulu’s past and present that stands in stark
opposition to bourgeois ideals.
IV

C major’s associations with themes of perceived primitivism continue in Act I, scene III, the “theater scene,” when Lulu dances for Dr. Schön’s fiancée before finally gaining power over him and forcing him to write a letter to his fiancée annulling their engagement. The scene highlights the great divide between the upper and lower class, establishing the theater as a place of “low” culture with the use of a jazz band and a solo saxophone. Lulu’s dancing can be assumed to be burlesque in nature, a main point of contrast between her and Schön’s fiancée, who functions in the opera as an archetype for the respectability of bourgeois society. Lulu demonstrates an awareness of her class when she says to Dr. Schön: “You mean to show me where my proper place is. You want to let your chosen bride see my dancing,” to which Schön responds with equally astute class awareness, “For one of your kind, it counts as fortunate if decent men and women come to watch you.”\textsuperscript{37} As with earlier scenes, the lower class is represented as basic and primitive in the theater scene.

In the theater scene, the opera stage represents the backstage of the theater where Lulu dances. The “diegetic” stage in the scene is offstage and is represented by diegetic jazz music and cheers from the theater audience. The strongest reference to primitivism in the scene involves the diegetic audience. After talking with Alwa backstage, Lulu exits the stage in order to take her place on the diegetic stage where she is expected to dance in front of Schön and his fiancée. After she leaves, Alwa muses to himself about an opera he could write about Lulu’s story. As Lulu presumably enters the theater stage, sounds of applause and shouts of “Bravo!” are heard from the side stage, and Alwa, pausing in his ruminations, remarks on the sounds around him: “It’s the same sort of howling as in a zoo (Menagerie) when they put the food in

\textsuperscript{37} Jacobs, \textit{Lulu}, 30.
front of the animals. (das Futter vor dem Käfig)”38 In this analogy, the audience is the hungry animal, and Lulu is their fodder. Given the sexual nature of her dance, the audience is essentially said to be feeding on her sexuality, an apt metaphor for the way Lulu is treated by other characters throughout the opera.

Alwa’s remark about hungry animals, and their similarities with a theater audience instantly call to mind the prologue of the opera, where an Animal Tamer introduces various animals from his menagerie, which Berg associates with characters in the opera by introducing their rows as the different animals are named. In the prologue, the Animal Tamer hints at the malicious nature of the audience in the final stanza:

“Und nun bliebt das Beste zu erwähnen:
Mein Schädel zwischen eines Raubtiers
Zähnen.
Wisst Ihr den Namen, den dies Raubtier führt?
Verehrtes Publikum—hereinspaziert!!”39

“And best of all to win your kind applause,
My head between a pair of savage jaws!
Whose are the jaws, then, whose the snarling face?
My worthy audience—pray take your place!”

While the animal trainer’s question is never directly answered, it is heavily suggested that the audience possesses the jaws encircling the Animal Tamer’s head. The words “Verehrtes Publikum,” immediately following the question, insinuates that the audience is a primal creature that could devour the Animal Tamer if he is deemed unsatisfactory. Jarman identifies Berg’s subversive tactics: “[T]he listener in the opera house is forced to realize that he is as much a part of that menagerie as the characters he has come to watch…he is forced to recognize the hypocrisy and the capacity for self-deception of both the characters on the stage and himself.”40

38 Jacobs, Lulu, 21.
39 Jacobs, Lulu, 1.
The animal metaphor in the Prologue is also rife with allusions to primitivism and primal nature. When Lulu is brought onstage, the Animal Tamer refers to her as a serpent, the “root of all evil,” a clear reference to the serpent in the Garden of Eden, the original deceiver and the genesis of all future evils. Naturally, as Lulu is being brought onstage, a C major triad is sustained in the bass of mm. 44-45. In m. 44-46 all twelve notes are played, roughly separated into white and black hexachords, white in the bass and black in the treble. The Animal Tamer continues, telling Lulu, “My sweetest beast, please don’t be what you’re not! You have no right to seem a gentler creature, distorting what is true in woman’s nature.” This phrase links Lulu’s acts of wanton sexuality in the play with a fundamental aspect of female nature, reinforcing the idea of Lulu as a primitive character and Lulu’s actions as primitive actions.

The twelve-note chord in Act I, scene III, the first of three in the opera, provides a musical link to the Prologue, further strengthening the primitive aspects of Alwa’s comparison of the audience to a pack of caged animals. The Mutterakkord, held by a fermata in m. 1104, has a C-E triad at its base, and is built upon a series of six stacked major and minor thirds. The C-E third has its origin at m. 1100, as Alwa is imagining Scene I of his opera: the death of the Medical Specialist. In an imitation of the Medical Specialist’s death scene, the C-E triad begins with the Hauptrhythmus before being sustained for the next three measures. After the initial presentation of the Hauptrhythmus in C and E, the subsequent triads of the twelve-note chord repeat the Hauptrhythmus, creating a denser texture until a final release at the twelve-note chord.

In addition to the Mutterakkord, whose bottom third hints at a tonal “root” beneath its layered complexity, the section in the theater scene where Alwa begins musing on an opera also contains cadential motion to C. In m. 1093, the Jazz band that accompanied Alwa and Lulu

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41 Jacobs, Lulu, 1.
closes the English Waltz on a sustained low G. The Jazz band is a characteristic feature of the Theater Scene, also serving as a signifier of lower class status, especially when juxtaposed with the bourgeois associations of the Orchestra. The jazz music is based on Schigolch’s Serial Trope; despite his physical absence in the theater scene, Schigolch is still present as an indicator of baseness and primitivism. Solo saxophone is present in select places in the opera to signal low culture even when the rest of the Jazz band is absent, as was noted in Schigolch’s appearance in Act II.\textsuperscript{42} As Alwa contemplates the opera, the accompaniment changes back to an orchestral accompaniment, moving to C through successive sustained E’s in mm. 1095-1099. The \textit{Mutterakkord} with C-E at its base begins a long section of music that prominently features a low C pedal, and when considered in relation to the Jazz band’s sustained G, resembles cadential V-I motion. By setting up this cadential gesture, Berg points to C as a referential center for the following sections of music.

The transitional section immediately following the \textit{Mutterakkord}, in which the Prince enters the room and begins talking about Lulu’s “bodily and spiritual dignity,” does not feature C. Conspicuously, the Prince’s eleven-note row omits C, a possible signal that in his idealistic view of Lulu and marriage he is oblivious to the sort of baseness that defines Schigolch, Lulu, and low culture.\textsuperscript{43} The C pedal returns to complete the Prince’s row only after the doorbell chord sounds and Alwa springs up with the distinct sense that something has gone wrong. It is sustained in mm. 1150-1158, during which the door to the stage is flung back open, and the sounds of the Jazz band return. For the first time in the scene, jazz band and orchestra play

\textsuperscript{42}It may be mentioned that saxophone accompanies Lulu’s Canzonetta music at the deaths of all her husbands, recalling its initial association with her detached response to the corpses.

\textsuperscript{43}Silvio Jose Dos Santos. “Marriage as Prostitution in Berg’s Lulu,” \textit{The Journal of Musicology}, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Spring 2008), 149.
simultaneously, with the jazz band playing Schigolch’s row over the orchestra’s C pedal. The low C is sustained until it ascends in Schön’s row in m. 1158. It returns in m. 1171, after the Jazz band music abruptly stops, and descends down two octaves, holding out the lowest C in the opera at mm. 1175-76. This leads, by way of an E-F-B-A arpeggiation (all white notes), to the Sextet. The sextet is based on Schigolch’s trope and the jazz music, and involves Dr. Schön ordering Lulu to get back onstage to dance for his future bride while Lulu protests. During the argument, the Prince suddenly realizes the significance of the situation before him, and why Lulu is so resistant to dancing for Schön and his fiancée. This moment is at the middle of the palindromic Sextet, a pivot on the pitch C.\textsuperscript{44} After learning about Lulu’s relationship with Schön, the Prince removes himself from her life, taking with him his promises of Africa and escape.\textsuperscript{45} This scene parallels the Monoritmica in which Schön reveals Lulu’s true nature to the Painter, albeit much less violently. When the “true nature” of Lulu is revealed, usually through associations with Schigolch, members of bourgeois society remove themselves from her life by death, abandonment, or punishment, as in the events of the third act that Karl Kraus referred to as the “revenge of the world of men.” The closing of the sextet is a palindromic retrograde of the opening: the white-note arpeggiation leads into the low C pedal, which then ascends two octaves, encasing the sextet within the realm of C and further establishing C’s connection with Schigolch, primitivism, and Lulu’s place as an outsider in high society.

\textsuperscript{44} Dos Santos, “Marriage as Prostitution,” 165.
\textsuperscript{45} The mention of Africa in this scene foreshadows its oppositional counterpart in Act III, scene I, where the Marquis, of which the Prince is an aristocratic foil, seeks to sell Lulu into a north African brothel, now with the opera’s most significant appearance of C major in association with Wedekind’s lute song (see the following section).
In Act III, scene I, C major returns to prominence as a key area in Berg’s adaptation of playwright Frank Wedekind’s lute song Konfession, variations of which are used throughout Act III to refer to prostitution. Over the course of Act III, Lulu’s situation becomes direr as she is forcefully ejected from bourgeois society and becomes the object of the “revenge” of various male characters. The coded language that reinforced Lulu’s outsider status in the bourgeois world becomes more explicitly hostile: Lulu is first blackmailed into prostitution by the Marquis, is exploited by Schigolch and Alwa, who fully support themselves through Lulu’s prostitution, and is finally murdered by Jack the Ripper, an act that both avenges Dr. Schön’s death and punishes Lulu for her gender, her class, and her sexuality.

In Wedekind’s lute song the voice is that of a prostitute who confesses before God that she would “far rather be a whore, than [the richest man in fame and fortune].” 47

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46 Dos Santos, “Marriage as Prostitution,” 168.
delight in being “loved passionately, vigorously again and again,” and only feeling shame when receiving payment, she adores her body and the desire it arouses in others. And considering it unjust to deny the world what inflames her “inner self,” she poses the rhetorical question, “Was there ever anyone born for the business of love as I was born for it?” Although the persona in Wedekind’s lute song does refer to prostitution as a business, it is clear she does not care much for the business—read, monetary—aspect of it. Her happiness comes instead from physical pleasure and being adored by many men, not from the money she receives. Receiving compensation appears to be the least favorite part of her profession since, as she claims, she would reject all the world’s riches in favor of the life she currently leads.

Although a compelling character in her own right, Wedekind’s prostitute serves as a vessel for articulating Wedekind’s naturalistic views on prostitution and female sexuality, ideas made popular by Otto Weininger’s 1913 philosophical text Geschlecht und Charakter. In the book, Weininger claims that an inclination towards prostitution is as “organic” to women as is motherhood. The social critic Karl Kraus, who Berg took as a great influence, held similar beliefs, claiming that sexuality was a woman’s essence.

In his previously-cited study of Lulu’s character, Leo Treitler articulates the difference between naturalist views of prostitution, such as Weininger’s and Wedekind’s, and expressionist views of prostitution through an analysis of artworks from each movement. Edouard Manet’s

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47 Susan Davies, trans., in Dos Santos, “Marriage as Prostitution in Berg’s Lulu,” JAMS, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Spring 2008), 165.
48 Dos Santos, “Marriage as Prostitution,” 145. Dos Santos notes that Berg’s copy of Weininger’s book is “heavily annotated,” a sign that Berg carefully considered Weininger’s beliefs.
49 Toulmin Janik, as cited in Dos Santos, “Marriage as Prostitution,” 146.
50 At many times in his letters to his wife, Berg mentions picking up the new issue of Die Fackel, Kraus’ popular social critique newsletter. See Bernard Grun, trans., Alban Berg: Letters to his Wife, 284.
*Nana*, (1877) depicts a woman who, although in a corset and undergarments is relatively covered up. (Appendix I, Ill. 3) She looks directly at the viewer as she get ready to powders her nose. In contrast, sketches by George Grosz display the woman assertively undressed in the company of several clothed male onlookers. In the sketch, “Home Sweet Home,” (1920) a fully nude woman sits on the lap of a man, while another man dressed in a hat and bowtie observes. In another, “Pillars of Society,” (1921) a woman in undergarments sits before two fully suited men, her breasts nearly spilling out of her corset. 51 (Appendix I, Ill. 4, 5) The blatant display of female undress in the two sketches calls to mind Kirchner’s works, which brazenly displayed female nudity and satirized the formality of bourgeois costume. Grosz’s titles sarcastically allude to comfort and stability, while the images display obvious inequality and hypocrisy; ironically, the enticing confrontation of wealthy businessmen with representatives of the oldest profession raises the question of who the “pillars of society” are: the old men in suits, or the prostitutes in front of them. The similarities between Grosz’s and Manet’s works are related to the men depicted in these paintings, as Treitler observes, “the intensity of the man’s gaze, and the precise way it is targeted on the woman’s anatomy; and the lie that these details give to the costume he wears as a symbol of his worldly respectability and power.”52

The two paintings illustrate Treitler’s distinction between naturalist and expressionist views of prostitution: “Naturalist artists and writers portrayed the prostitute as a fallen woman […] But at the same time they endowed her with an ultimately superior morality in order to show up the counterfeit righteousness of the bourgeois world of the men for whose pleasure she exists. By contrast, Expressionist artists and writers turned a cool and cynical eye on the scene: the

51 Treitler discusses Grosz’s sketch, “Near the Limit” in his essay. I was unable to find a copy of this sketch in public domain, but thankfully, there were more than a few appropriate Grosz sketches in public domain to choose from.
52 Treitler, “The Lulu Character and the Character of Lulu,” 178.
woman, neither fallen nor merely submissive, delights in the active play of her sexuality; the man of the world is spellbound, perched on the edge of disaster.”

Absent from Treitler’s characterization is the prostitute as depicted in Lulu (although his description of the expressionist prostitute perfectly describes Lulu as married woman). In Act III, prostitution is revealed to be a profession not chosen based on a love of sex, nor a position that imbues a woman with “superior morality,” but rather an unwelcome result of male coercion and ultimately a tool for male revenge, as Lulu is killed by Jack the ripper, “whose homicidal urge toward her arises at one level out of his very specific sexual rage at her, and at another out of his hatred for some generalized idea of Woman that she symbolizes in his mind.”

Berg’s treatment of the C major lute song strategically questions assumptions of naturalness and fundamentalism, in keeping with other instances of C in the opera. Most obviously, the lute song accompanies the Marquis in his “Lied des Mädchenschändlers” rather than Lulu herself. This simple change counters Weininger and Kraus by asserting that the pimp, not the prostitute, is the one who derives any pleasure from prostitution. Rather than being framed as a natural choice for a sexual woman, prostitution is defined by Berg as a system in a male-dominated society that commodifies female sexuality for male gratification. Berg’s choice to accompany the Marquis with Wedekind’s lute song furthers the thematic connection between the Marquis and the Prince, who is accompanied by the wedding march from Lohengrin when he proposes to Lulu in Act I, scene III. Berg added a significant element to Wedekind’s plays Earth Spirit and Pandora’s Box, which provided the textual basis for Lulu, by assigning the same actors to different roles, linking them thematically. The Marquis, the Prince, and the Manservant (in Act II, which is not discussed in this essay) are portrayed by the same singers, and are all

53 Ibid.
54 Treitler, “The Lulu Character and the Character of Lulu,” 194.
musically represented by eleven-note rows that omit C. Silvio dos Santos points to the consistencies between the three characters as an indicator of the similarities between marriage/household and prostitution, all of which belong to the same sort of slavery from which Lulu cannot escape. Despite her outward change in fortune in Act III, prostitution does not provide Lulu with the option of living outside of the boundaries of bourgeois society, as was a common naturalist perception; rather, she simply occupies a lower position within it.

The Lied des Mädchenhandlers begins in Act III/Scene I in m. 103 as one of two intermezzos within Lulu’s duet with the Marquis, a series of twelve variations of the Prince’s Choralbearbeitung of Act I.\textsuperscript{55} Preying on Lulu’s poverty and fugitive status, the Marquis blackmails Lulu into prostitution. Accompanied by the lute song melody, the Marquis describes his profession: “From these countless young adventuresses, who come here from the finest of families from every land the world over, many a tender creature formed for pleasure and for love I have conveyed into the place which suits her best (natürlichen Bestimmung zugeführt).”\textsuperscript{56} At the final line of verse, which echoes Weininger’s beliefs on the naturalness of prostitution, the bass moves through a succession of tones related by fifths, ending on a strong C in m. 119. When the Lied des Mädchenhandlers comes to a close, there is a strong feeling of a cadence to C, due to the circle of fifths progression in the bass, and the Marquis’ line which finishes on G. The final C in m. 119 is also similar to the C’s at the beginning and end of the Act I, scene III Sextet, as it spans several octaves. Berg’s choice to use harmonic fifths to lead to a C cadence seems to reinforce the Marquis’ assertion of the naturalness of prostitution for young women (natürliche Bestimmung); because of the systematic progression of the circle of fifths, when the

\textsuperscript{55} Dos Santos, “Marriage as Prostitution,” 162.
\textsuperscript{56} Jacobs, Lulu, 64.
progression comes to an end on C it suggests the same kind of inevitability that the Marquis associated with prostitution.

Lulu’s response fully counters the Marquis’s suggestion. Outlining Alwa’s twelve-tone row, Lulu asks, “What am I for that kind of work?” As she verbally refutes him, her music also provides a counter to his, as it turns away from harmonic progressions back to the twelve-tone row. When the lute music returns in m. 172, as the Marquis tells Lulu that he has already sold the pictures of her that she gave him (“That one where you posed as Eve”) to an Egyptian man, she responds again in Alwa’s row, “I’ll never let myself live in a house of amusement like that—kept like a prisoner!” The Marquis’s allusion to a picture of Lulu as Eve conjures up imagery of the Garden of Eden, similar to Lulu’s characterization as a serpent in the Prologue; Lulu’s refusal also alludes to the Prologue imagery of caged animals kept for amusement. In establishing a direct conflict between the lute song music and Alwa’s row, Berg creates a dichotomy similar to the one he established with the two Schliesse mir die Augen Beide lied. The Marquis’s assertion that prostitution is the “natürliche Bestimmung” for girls aligns with Weininger’s naturalist views, the old philosophy that Berg and his contemporaries pushed back against, and thus the tonal music becomes associated with the ideas of the past. Lulu’s description of a zoo-like “house of amusement” aligns much more with the expressionist philosophy of the systems put in place to control and restrict true expressions of sexuality, and thus her use of Alwa’s row reinforces the notion that Lulu’s reaction resonates with Berg’s contemporary ideology.

The contrast between tonality and atonality as it relates to the lute song melody is further explored in the interlude between scenes I and II, a series of four variations on the lute melody. Each of the variations is representative of a male character through use of their characteristic row. The variations progress from tonal to twelve-tone texture, a progression that Perle sees as a
representation of the emergence of the twelve-tone composition of the Second Viennese School. The first of the four variations is a *Maestoso* tonal variation that features the lute song music first in C major, then A minor. In the words of Berg’s student Willi Reich, this variation “is instrumented with pomp and splendour” and “refers back to the false brilliance and cheating grandeur of the preceding scene,” referring to the sale of “Jungfrau” railroad stocks in Act III/Scene I, which initially seemed promising (“All the world has won!”) but ultimately failed (“All the world has lost!”). Throughout the variation are ascending and descending revolver chords (E, A, B, C, F) which, when reordered, are the first five notes of Dr. Schön’s row I. This inversion is notably featured in Dr. Schön’s Act II, scene I aria, “*Das mein Lebensabend,*” in which his 12-tone row is divided into five and seven notes, the first five present in Schön’s opening line as well as the revolver chords that infuse the aria. At the end of Variation 1 of the Interlude, the bass notes move through a circle of fifths progression similar to the progression at the end of the *Lied des Mädchenhandlers,* accompanied by chromatically descending tritones that lead into Variation 2.

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57 Hall, *A View of Berg’s Lulu Through the Autograph Sources,* 155.
59 The name “Jungfrau” (translated as “young girl” as well as “virgin”) is an obvious symbol for the sale of female bodies, made explicitly clear with the presence of a fifteen-year-old girl in the scene, who is leered at by the men as her mother contemplates putting all of her money into the Jungfrau stocks. The rise and fall of Jungfrau stocks is in the same scene where Lulu is blackmailed into prostitution, a profession Alwa calls “dreadful” and which is meant to signify the lowest point in Lulu’s fall out of bourgeois favor. The Jungfrau stocks refer to the sale of female bodies, yet because it is cloaked in coded language and is a part of the commercial stock exchange, it is accepted in bourgeois society and does not face the same stigma that prostitution does. The inclusion of the Jungfrau stocks calls attention to the fact that female bodies are sold in many different ways within society, yet only some forms are stigmatized and seen as symbolic of “low” class.
60 Dr. Schön’s melody in the opening line of “Das mein Lebensabend” is also Jack’s melody line when he washes Lulu’s blood off of his hands.
The *Grazioso* second variation is a polytonal variation, where the lute melody appears in two canons a tritone apart, one in C major and Gb minor, the other a third below in A major and Eb minor. Alwa and Schigolch are both represented in this variation. The bass has a roughly chromatic line, suggestive of Schigolch’s Serial Trope. Alwa’s row appears in trichord clusters at several points in the variation.\(^{61}\) It first appears in m.715, where the first six notes of Alwa’s row \(P_{10}\) are played at the start of the lute song melody in Eb minor while the next four appear in the bass, as seen in Fig. 4. The same ten notes appear in the transition from Variation 2 to 3, the eleventh note of the row finally appearing as a C# in the A major lute melody that begins Variation 3.

The third variation, *Funèbre*, is a free atonal variation, in which the lute song appears in the bass unaltered, first in A major, then a third lower, in F# minor. The middle voice of the first strain and the top voice of the second are set to a quasi-cantus firmus that is not directly derived from any row. Different permutations of Alwa’s row appear “very freely” distributed between trichords and sections of the cantus firmus.\(^{62}\) Variation 4, *Affetuoso*, distributes the lute melody in octave displacements among the strings, first in F# major, then in the relative minor, D#. The tune conforms to the basic set, which appears in prime form and inversions throughout the variation. Embedded in this variation is the *Bild* motive, whose presence heralds the return of Lulu’s portrait in Scene II.

Finally, the beginning of Act III, scene II opens with a dialogue between Alwa and Schigolch in which Alwa asks, “Is there anything more wretched than a prostitute?”\(^{63}\) The lute song is played by a barrel-organ offstage, first in Eb major, then in C major. Present throughout

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\(^{62}\) Ibid.

\(^{63}\) Jacobs, *Lulu*, 78.
this scene is a tremolo between E/A and C#, the first three notes of Schön’s row, which establishes A major as the key of Schön’s return, and the revenge of the world of men.

Throughout the variations, Berg sets the lute song melody in consecutive descending minor thirds completing a cycle that begins and ends with C major.⁶⁴

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Table 1: Key Progression of the Interlude Variations.

Much like the circle of fifths descent to C in the *Lied des Mädchenhandlers*, the minor thirds cycle from C major to C major in the variations emphasizes a sense of inevitability regarding prostitution. However, unlike the *Lied des Mädchenhandlers*, which remained in the tonal realm, the interlude variations span the range of musical possibility, from complete tonality to twelve-tone texture (perhaps suggesting that, regardless of any changes to society, prostitution remains). Descending thirds do not carry the same sort of cadential weight as perfect fifths, and as such the return to C major does not have the feel of a definitive conclusion so much as it carries a feeling of cyclical permanence. The return of Lulu’s husbands as her clients and the return of her portrait equate Lulu’s life as a prostitute to her life as a wife. Similarly, the musical representations of Alwa, Schigolch, Dr. Schön, and the portrait within the changing lute song variations brings symbols of Lulu’s life in the first half of the opera together with her life in Act III, suggesting a fundamental invariance of Lulu’s situation despite the radical changes in outward appearance. Circular return is a common theme in many of Berg’s works; represented

⁶⁴ Dos Santos, “Marriage and Prostitution,” 175.
musically by palindromic retrograde and cyclical continuations, of which the interlude variations are an example, the returning forms signify Berg’s Nietzschean conception of time as an eternal return.65

Subsequent iterations of the lute song melody in Act III, scene II, when the characters are living in a dingy attic and surviving only on Lulu’s prostitution earnings, are always heard as one of the variations, never in the original C major of the *Lied des Mädchenhandlers*. By only playing the lute song variations, Berg seems to expose the inaccuracy of the Marquis’s claim to the naturalness of prostitution as a vocation for women, as its reality for Lulu is poverty, shame, and ultimately death. In addition to all of this, Schigolch and Alwa reveal themselves to be untrustworthy companions, as they are all too willing to live off of Lulu’s earnings while turning up their noses at her profession and gazing longingly at her portrait. The contrast between the tonality of the Marquis’s lied, and the atonality of the lute song variations reveals a disconnect between the Marquis’ idealistic projections, and the sobering reality, as Silvio dos Santos writes in his essay on “Marriage and Prostitution in *Lulu*”:

*C major appears in Lulu as an ironic rendering of the world of appearances in the Paris Scene (that is, Act III/Scene I). Twelve-tone language, on the other hand, reveals the substance behind that world. It is only through the transition between the tonality of Wedekind’s song and the crude awakening caused by the two twelve tone chords in the final scene that the nature of the characters involved in the drama are revealed.*66

As the C major tonality of the lute song gradually dissolves into the twelve-tone texture, so dissolves the idea of a primitive baseness within Lulu, antithetical to bourgeois society. Were it true that Lulu’s sexuality was an indicator of her fundamental baseness, prostitution would

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66 Dos Santos, “Marriage and Prostitution,” 181.
afford Lulu sexual agency away from the abuses of the bourgeois elite. However, it is instead revealed as yet another facet of bourgeois society designed to control and commodify female sexuality, which Berg succinctly summarized: “Bordell ist Ehe. (Brothel is Marriage)”

Scholars frequently point to Berg’s involvement in the Viennese art scene as the source of the social criticism in his two operas. Specifically, Berg’s attendance at the opening performance of Wedekind’s *Pandora’s Box* (1905), and Büchner’s *Woyzeck* (1914), provided direct inspiration for *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*, as Hans Redlich explains: “The revolutionary social criticism implied in both plays profoundly affected Berg and his conception of the opera of social protest and compassion, which he was to create in the very hour of Imperial Austria’s doom.”

Lulu is first and foremost a critique of the social systems in Berg’s Vienna, specifically the struggles of the downtrodden poor, and their mistreatment by the bourgeois elite. Berg transferred the action of Wedekind’s play into the atmosphere of the 1920’s through casting changes, libretto choices, and musical signifiers. C major is but one of the musical signifiers; Berg adeptly used the tonal sound of the C major triad to contrast with the twelve-tone technique which provides the basis for the serial tropes of the opera.

Drawing on historical conceptions of key, represented in the two lied of *Schliesse mir die Augen Beide*, Berg uses C major as a symbol of fundamentalism, associated with perceptions of baseness and primitivism perceived as Lulu’s “true nature” because of her poor upbringing and her sexual promiscuity, as well as naturalist perceptions of woman. Although Lulu herself claims to be a “prodigy of nature,” it is clear at the end of the opera that she is actually governed by the laws of man, not the laws of nature. Thus the C major chord that came to be associated with the barbarism of Lulu’s true nature is revealed to be a fallacy; and the subsuming of the C

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67 Ibid., 151.
major lute song into twelve-tone texture is a musical representation of the expressionist push against naturalist philosophy, which Berg shared with his contemporaries in the art world.

Berg’s use of C major in the opera thus serves as a fatalistic critique of bourgeois codes of ethics, revealing them to be hypocritical in a similar fashion as did artists such as Kirchner and Grosz. Composing Lulu at the beginning of the Nazi regime, Berg was highly aware of the political goings on—he morbidly referred to his house where he composed Lulu as his “concentration camp”—and also expressed a desire for the opera to be a form of protest itself; when Eric Kleiber agreed to conduct the premiere in Berlin, Berg’s response eagerly anticipated “an outburst of the most colossal indignation!” As alluded to in the prologue, the audience of upper class opera attendees has the potential to be just as monstrous as the audience of hungry animals that Alwa describes in Lulu’s burlesque theater. C major in Lulu serves a similar function as it did in Lied I of Schliesse mir die Augen Beide; C major and tonality look back to the ideas of the past, while twelve-tone language examines and critiques Berg’s present.

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69 Adorno, Alban Berg, 9
Illustration 1. Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Der Verkauf des Schattens* (1915). Public Domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Works Cited.


