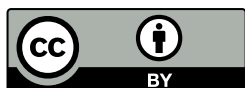


# “A soul, rubbing the sleep from its eyes in the next world”: Dramaturgical Aspects of Metaphysical Temporality in the Libretti of Alban Berg’s Operas

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## Abstract

Temporality, as a narrative device, was a central element in Alban Berg's operas both textually and musically. The systematic form of creating circular structures with palindromes via large-scale retrogrades was meant to turn narrative time back onto itself as an expression of fatalistic negation. This conceptualization held metaphysical implications for Berg that coalesced with his notions of time and space. In his operas, and among other ploys, Berg would appropriate the libretti to textually traverse between the two temporal realms of the empirical world and the metaphysical plane in order to obfuscate the perceptions of reality for his characters, and ultimately put them on paths of predetermined doom through a perpetual repetition of fate, as in the case of *Wozzeck*. Berg would do this at his own discretion, superseding the authority of the playwrights whose texts he chose to set to music, in order to achieve his desired philosophical and autobiographical outcomes, which were his primary concerns. It will become evident, therefore, that the temporal implications were just as viable textually for Berg as they were musically, but that the metaphysical dimension of those implications were reserved solely for the libretti. Lastly, a comprehensive understanding of these Bergian aesthetics will be brought full circle by making explicit the essential associations of textual metaphysical temporality that Berg shared with and derived from Richard Wagner.

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# Introduction

[1] The construct of time has always been one of humanity's most profound elements of collective understanding. By the end of the nineteenth century, the sense of a linear progression of time had become more socially mainstream, where it was increasingly juxtaposed with notions of mortality. A fascination with reconciling with the past, anticipating the future, and understanding the present has often been a central theme in almost any creative endeavor. However, technological advancements during the Industrial Revolution and especially since the advent of motion pictures have greatly evolved the perception of temporality in that it has become possible to aesthetically represent abstract and metaphysical depictions of time. This was also reflected in psychological trends, which became more introspective via technologically-tangible applications that were never possible before the turn of the twentieth century.

Stephen Kern maintained that public time and private time were separate and opposing ideas that began to widen in the minds of many thinkers.<sup>[1]</sup> Indeed, public time was seen as a universality of linear temporality that only moves forward, whereas private time was "as capricious as a dreamer's fancy. The thrust of the age was to affirm the reality of private time against that of a single public time and to define its nature as heterogeneous, fluid, and reversible."<sup>[2]</sup> The question then became "whether the fixed and spatially represented public time was really time at all or some metaphysical interloper from the realm of space."<sup>[3]</sup>

In light of these ideas, a primary tenet of this study is to represent the discrepancy between public and private time as a metaphor for the duality of the empirical world and the metaphysical realm, which is in a constant state of flux in the narratives of Alban Berg's two operas, *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*. Berg lived in an era in which "the features of traditional time were challenged as artists and intellectuals envisioned times that reversed themselves, moved at irregular rhythms, and even came to a dead stop. In the *fin de siècle*, time's arrow did not always fly straight and true."<sup>[4]</sup> The motion picture, or film, allowed for time that "could be compressed, expanded, or reversed in a more versatile way by editing the film. Intervals of time could be literally cut out of a sequence and temporal order could be modified at will."<sup>[5]</sup>

Berg was privy to both Wagnerian and Schopenhauerian metaphysics and was also exposed to the burgeoning film industry, which influenced his views on temporality even further. The phenomenon of the latter would compel him to insert a film at the crucial epicenter of his opera *Lulu* that depicted a reversal of time, while familiarity with Wagner in particular would inform Berg's autobiographical projections in his operas. As Berg's music represents a convergence of romanticized ideals within a modernistic framework, so too does his view of time apply simultaneous notions of anti-modern metaphysics that diverge from the advent of technology in Berg's day. Contemporary trends at the time included evolving aesthetic applications of temporality beyond the Wagnerian tendencies that were so central to Berg. In this regard, I show what Kern implied was the modernization of temporality, juxtaposed with the earlier Wagner, representing the opposing dualities (the past versus the future) that are so intrinsic to Berg's aesthetic conceptions. This study will therefore explore how Berg's view of temporality was a profound narrative element of his operas and how he effectively represented those notions by appropriating the textual structure of the plays on which his operas are based to facilitate his temporal designs.<sup>[6]</sup> The libretti of both operas will be analyzed in detail, as will dualistic notions of the empirical and metaphysical within the operas through Berg's autobiographical allusions. The last section will illustrate the profound and relevant associations of textual metaphysical temporality that Berg shared with Richard Wagner and show why this association is essential for

a comprehensive understanding of Berg's conception of temporality.

## Aspects of Bergian Temporality

The essence of temporality in Berg's operas occupies significant narrative features that are simultaneously equal and different in the two works. The similarities are predicated on a foundation of structural form in which Berg incorporates a cyclical system of musical palindromes to emphasize his notions of time. Before an analysis of the opera libretti can commence, it is essential to discuss the palindromes in order to comprehend how this system was the structural catalyst onto which Berg built his textual narrative designs within the operas.<sup>[7]</sup> An understanding of Berg's formal structure of palindromes and what they represent to him personally is the foundation on which the subsequent analysis of the libretti will be predicated, with the aim of seeing how these texts exemplified the temporal dualities of the empirical and metaphysical planes. Furthermore, the subsequent sections will depict how the forthcoming structural descriptions, despite being more indicative here of the music, can be equally applied to the libretti via circular structures in the text, as well as through the text's metaphysical imagery in what will be described as temporal suspensions and predestinations. However, it must be made explicit that the fundamental difference between notions of temporality in the music and the libretti is that the music's temporality is contrived from palindromes alone, while the libretti contain those elements as well as the added dimension of metaphysics that the music cannot symbolize. For that reason, the study will focus exclusively on the libretti in the ensuing analyses of the operas. A necessary point of departure when analyzing these traits is an awareness of Berg's "orientation toward musical time and musical form: the identification of eternity with a moment; and the association of eternity with motions that are circular ... . [E]ternity is viewed as being at once temporally limitless and simultaneous, both unmeasurable yet reducible to an instant."<sup>[8]</sup> Incidentally, eternity encapsulated within a moment is precisely how the Captain describes his temporal fear in his text in the opening scene of *Wozzeck*.

[2] Berg's method of creating these circular cycles with his palindromes is characterized by the reaching of a linear limit and then through a mirror form that turns the section back onto itself in retrograde, thus concluding the section with music from the beginning, closing the temporal circle, and implying an eternal return to the beginning. The passage of time, coupled with the circular retrograde, depicts temporality as simultaneously eternal and instant at the moment of return.<sup>[9]</sup> However, the retrograde is not an identical reaffirmation of the music to that point. Therefore, "though the music's point of destination turns out to be identical—or nearly so—to that of its origin, the path back is not a straight line that passes in simple retrograde motion over material and formal contexts previously traversed. The return is achieved through processes of continuous forward development whose ultimate outcome proves to be—however paradoxically—the same as its source."<sup>[10]</sup> Dave Headlam agrees with this point, noting that "the effect of Berg's palindromes is twofold: on the one hand, time is arrested and seems to retreat, suspending chronological time and forward motion; on the other hand, new aspects of the music emerge in retrograde, creating a forward impetus."<sup>[11]</sup> An important distinction to make is that retrogrades implying time are different from recapitulations, which can emphasize similarities but not mirror forms. Moreover, the circular retrogrades appear at the very end of sections and imply that they will begin again, whereas recapitulations have an implication of finitude. Indeed, "circular returns appear to grow out of what precedes them as an 'inevitable' continuation, the

next stage in an uninterrupted formal development.”<sup>[12]</sup>

The question now arises as to why Berg used palindromes to emphasize a repetition of time. It is well known that Berg’s music is, in essence, programmatically autobiographic and ultimately despairingly deterministic. It is therefore logical that his palindromes “reflect a ‘view of man as a helpless creature unable to alter his preordained fate and unable to break out of the tragic and absurd dance of death within which he is trapped—a fatalistic and deeply pessimistic view of life that underlies all of Berg’s mature compositions.’ The palindromes are thus interpreted as symbols of negation, their reversal of musical time mirroring a desire to erase temporal passage and its inevitable consequences.”<sup>[13]</sup> However, the tragic implication is that the consequences cannot be changed but must be perpetually relived. This phenomenon will later be seen in the operas, and particularly in *Wozzeck*. Forming a contextual reflection of the time, Berg’s dodecaphonic contemporary and friend, Ernst Krenek, stated that “the idea of the retrograde expressed an ‘opposition to the lapse of time,’ that it constituted a characteristic content element of the New Music: ‘its relation to infinity, its eschatological coloring, its pathos-laden dialectic resulting from the solitary struggle of the individual against the irretrievable evanishment of onrushing time into nothingness.’”<sup>[14]</sup>

Berg’s propensity for fatalistic pessimism is strikingly in accordance with a Schopenhauerian ethos that presumes to characterize humanity’s enslavement via the empirical will. Certainly, there are metaphysical implications in Berg’s conception of temporality that go beyond formal structures in the music. In a letter to Arnold Schoenberg, dated December 21, 1912, Berg illustrates his fascination with Honoré de Balzac’s novel *Séraphita*, which is laden with metaphysical symbolism of time and space. (Although, Berg makes no such mention in the actual letter.)<sup>[15]</sup> In essence, Balzac’s novel incorporates Emanuel Swedenborg’s imagery of heaven, from which this metaphysical emphasis stems.<sup>[16]</sup> Swedenborg posited that time and space are different in the spiritual realm because there are no moving physical bodies, such as revolving celestial bodies, from which time can be derived. If no such bodies exist, then time can only be measured through a “spiritual state” that exists outside of a temporal construct.<sup>[17]</sup> The implication of this for Berg is that if he conceived of creating music that would elicit a sense of metaphysical spirituality, then it would in some way be emphatic of this temporal transcendence that does not measure time in a linearly empirical way.<sup>[18]</sup> Berg’s well-documented preoccupation with Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* can also draw a corollary to an awareness of metaphysical time and space that quantifies temporality in similar spiritual applications. As it will be exemplified in the operas, it can be inferred that “between chronological, physical time and static, spiritual time, it is possible to posit that Berg may in fact be offering us the representation of a world in which time presses forward in the physical realm while the static spiritual realm resides behind it.”<sup>[19]</sup> Theodor Adorno has often been quoted for his contribution to the understanding of Bergian temporality and noted how “his [Berg’s] propensity, too, for mirror and retrograde formations may, apart from the twelve-tone technique, be related to the visual dimension of his responses; musical retrograde patterns are anti-temporal, they organize music as if it were an intrinsic simultaneity.”<sup>[20]</sup>

Douglas Jarman describes the symbolism behind Berg’s use of palindromes by noting how “at the center of each palindrome time comes momentarily to a standstill (the central point of the *Lulu* Film Music has the indication ‘a complete standstill’ above it) before the music reverses itself and runs, inexorably, back to its starting point. In effect, it wipes itself out as though it had never been, denying its own existence and returning to a point at which it restores the status quo ante.”<sup>[21]</sup> This is again indicative of eternity being captured in an instant, albeit with a destructive

intent. Jarman further emphasized this by reiterating how Berg's "retrogrades and palindromes represent a fatalistic view of life since, having reached their central turning point, their course is compositionally predetermined."<sup>[22]</sup> Nevertheless, if the predetermined retrograde exists within a spiritual, temporal standstill, chronological, empirical time may move forward through non-retrograde recapitulations, which could imply an unwritten fate in the real world, because it is not an unequivocal mirror form. Therefore, notions of fatalism and predetermination are entirely contingent upon which temporal plane Berg is alluding to. Since textual or musical palindromes are not staples of every single scene in Berg's operas, it can only stand to reason that temporality is both exclusively linear and cyclical. In the case of *Wozzeck*, this can be disputed on the basis of the nature of the opera's ending, yet the forms of his temporal negation are not omnipresent. This would logically suggest that both real/empirical and spiritual/metaphysical realms are inherent within both operas.



**Figure 1: Benedikt Fred**

**Dolbin, *Alban Berg* (1935),  
*Modern Music* 8, no. 3 (March-April 1936): [31]  
By courtesy of [RIPM](#) (Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals)**



# Wozzeck

[3] The references to time in Berg's first opera are significant and occur in both overt declarations and through subtle imagery. All of the references, however, are cyclical in construct in that they reoccur in ways that act both as mirror images of the original reference and as a return to them, signifying temporal repetition. Most historians center their focus on the temporality of *Wozzeck* within the first and fourth scenes of Act I. Certainly, these are crucial scenes that represent those overt declarations that form paramount narrative centers. However, this is only the beginning. Douglas Jarman draws attention to the opera's opening scene between Wozzeck and the Captain, where the concept of temporality is "dominated by the idea of time moving in a circle to return to the point at which it began, an idea expressed by the Captain's image of an endlessly turning mill wheel. ... The relevance which the Captain's obsession with time and the need to do everything slowly has to the opera as a whole is indicated by the setting of the word 'Langsam,' when it appears at the end of the first sentence in the opera. ... The Captain's obsession has its counterpart in the Doctor's obsession [scene four] with the need for speed and his grandiose delusions of immortality."<sup>[23]</sup> Jarman goes on to say that "the mysterious-sounding musical patterns which result [*sic*] not only represent the 'lines, circles, and strange figures' of the text but also, being palindromic, recall the retrograde motion which, in the first scene of the opera, symbolized the inescapable circle of time."<sup>[24]</sup> The geometric details that Wozzeck mentions in the text, "stand as a symbol of the inevitability of the circular course of the opera."<sup>[25]</sup> As time is rendered inescapable, it takes on a major narrative motif that constitutes a dooming factor in an inherently Schopenhauerian display of pessimism. Adorno also describes this opening scene with the Captain, "where the utmost in kinetic activity ceases for a moment of breathless suspense, where time is suspended in space, earnestly submissive to the parodistic words of the Captain, who is frightened by infinity as the contradiction between unending duration and mere moment—until Wozzeck comes to himself and time intervenes to subdue the enchanted circle of his fear."<sup>[26]</sup> Adorno further emphasizes the duality of temporality as both limitless and instant with another reference to the Captain, noting how "*Wozzeck* was conceived as with a bated breath, at once eternal and of the moment, as captured in the grotesque words of the Captain."<sup>[27]</sup>

An appraisal of the libretto is crucial in determining the various temporal representations in the opera. However, as a point of departure, it should be noted that Berg freely appropriated Georg Büchner's text to constitute a textual, cyclical return and other symmetrical ideas. Indeed, by focusing on the word "langsam" (slowly) in the first scene, it becomes a motivic representation of the Captain's temporality, so much so that Berg alters the word order to create a cyclical symmetry and has "langsam" be the last word of the scene, as well as the first.<sup>[28]</sup>

In the opera's first scene, where Wozzeck is shaving the Captain, a reference to time is the very first impression that the audience is given as the Captain exclaims to Wozzeck to go slowly. He immediately expresses a fear of the passing of time and asks Wozzeck, "what will you do with the great expanse of time before you now?"<sup>[29]</sup> The Captain goes on to emphasize his fear of eternity and perfectly describes the temporal notion of time being simultaneously infinite and instant when he notes that eternity "cannot be always ... but a mere moment." He further illustrates his fear by describing how "the whole world in one short day revolves. And if I see a mill-wheel that turns, it always gives me melancholia."<sup>[30]</sup> The Captain, therefore, associates his temporal fears with circular structures like the revolving world and turning mill-wheel, implying the ultimate motif of the opera: doomed repetition. That first scene of the first act (I/i) concludes with the

same words uttered by the Captain, who again tells Wozzeck to go “slowly, quite slowly,”<sup>[31]</sup> bringing the scene full circle.

The following scene introduces two varying temporal motivic structures. The first is in the form of a stage direction (which are all solely Berg's) that describes Wozzeck as “standing still; staring into the distance.”<sup>[32]</sup> In this and subsequent instances, the stage direction calls for the characters to look off into the distance in disconnected ways. This can be inferred as a temporal suspension of sorts, where the character is momentarily taken out of the linear narrative of time and is portrayed as being in a quasi-metaphysical state where he is no longer affected by the empirical rules of time. And in this state of being, Wozzeck demonstrates the second motivic structure of predestination. He claims that he sees “a fire! It rises from the earth into heaven.”<sup>[33]</sup> This exclamation is flanked by stage directions that illustrate how Wozzeck's temporal suspension is truly outside the parameters of empirical reality: Before his first mention of fire, the stage direction describes the onset of the sunset, and after his text, the direction states, “twilight, gradually.”<sup>[34]</sup> The implication of predestination is centered on Wozzeck seeing fire or varying representations of red, such as mist, and the moon, which ultimately epitomize doom. These temporal visions will haunt him for the duration of the opera. Once twilight returns and Wozzeck is absorbed back into the narrative's temporality, his final lines of the scene read, “still, all is still ... and all the world ... dead.”<sup>[35]</sup> This is another predestined temporal signifier, since Wozzeck utters the exact same words in Act III when he stumbles over Marie's corpse while searching for the murder weapon. This connection of stillness and death can also act as an antithesis to the linear progression of time. Stillness, or a standstill, is most emphatic for those who are dead.

[4] The fourth scene of the first act, where Wozzeck encounters the Doctor, is the other scene, along with the opera's opening scene, where narrative temporality is at its most transparent. Indeed, just like the first scene sought to unequivocally demonstrate the Captain's fear of the passage of time, so does this one do the same for the Doctor but conversely emphasizes his pursuit of immortality through his work. Despite this scene being vital in its introduction of the Doctor and portraying the Doctor as a temporal antithesis of the Captain, there is a crucial moment of subtle imagery in the scene that is once more expressed in Wozzeck's text. In the middle of the scene, he mentions how “when nature has vanished ... and the world's so dark, so dark that you have to grope round it with your hands, searchingly ... when it's there ... and is not there! When all around is dark and ... from out the West red light is glowing, as if from a chimney. Oh, what ... what is there to cling to?”<sup>[36]</sup> This passage is replete with meaning. Wozzeck is essentially describing, albeit in a confused way, the simultaneous temporal existence of two planes, which he traverses in equal measure. The vanishing of nature is equivalent to the disappearance of reality, the empirical world, and linear, chronological temporality, leaving him to reside in the dark, spiritual, metaphysical realm where temporality is absent. Again, Wozzeck experiences these phenomena when he is still and staring into the distance. He also again notices a varying representation of the color red, signifying another return of his predestined doom of murder and his own death. The tragic implication of this is that Wozzeck is subconsciously aware of this superimposition of the two planes of existence yet is doomed to both commit the mistakes that he vaguely sees as being imminent and repeat the cycle. In a final display of confusion in this scene, Wozzeck says: “The toadstools ... haven't you seen the circles of toadstools out there on the ground? Lines and circles ... strange figures ... would that one could read them!”<sup>[37]</sup> This text encapsulates both the circular structure of time within the opera and the two planes as Wozzeck sees them: the lines he mentions are a signifier for chronological, empirical time, while the circles are the repetition of nebulous, metaphysical time. Yet, the



toadstool is a part of nature, which is rooted in empirical reality. However, Wozzeck beheld them when he was not in a temporal suspension, and hence he did not glean any predestined images of red or spiritual darkness when discussing this phenomenon with the Doctor.

Act two, scene two brings the Captain and Doctor together for the first time. Their temporal motives of slow and fast, respectively, are juxtaposed as they each express disdain for the other's way of adhering to time constructs. The two of them are firmly rooted in an empirical structure of linear temporality, which is emphasized through the expression of four times the timeframe of four weeks, as the Doctor mentions and then reiterates the remaining lifespan of one of his patients. This narrative ploy is effective in again epitomizing the temporal preoccupations of each character: The timeframe of four weeks instills a deep fear in the Captain, whereas the Doctor sees it as another opportunity to cement his immortality through medical research, exclaiming that his scrutiny of the illness will yield to "immortal experimenting!"<sup>[38]</sup> The empirical nature of this discussion is offset by the entrance of Wozzeck, who presents a metaphor of the two temporal planes by noting how "the earth to some is hot as hell" and "hell is ... so cold ... beside it."<sup>[39]</sup> Wozzeck demonstrates his continued confusion by describing these images in false perceptions. In a fit of despair, at the end of the scene, he contemplates death by hanging: "Then one would know ... just where one is."<sup>[40]</sup> Wozzeck here implies that the permanent stillness of death would clarify for him which temporal plane he resides in or, at the very least, would hopefully root him in one instead of both.

The following scene, II/iii, is a crucial narrative marker that predetermines Marie's murder. At the end of an argument that the pair have, Marie declares that she would rather have a knife in her than have anyone lay a hand on her. The stage direction after this text reads that Wozzeck "stands staring after her."<sup>[41]</sup> He is once again residing within a temporal suspension. The motivic repercussion of this state of being for Wozzeck is that he is overcome by a sense of temporal predestination, which occurs again, as he reaffirms, "Better a knife-blade," and adds, "Man is a chasm ... I'm falling downwards ... into the dizzy depths ... I'm falling ..."<sup>[42]</sup> The implication here is that Wozzeck anticipates his own drowning.

The fourth scene of act two incorporates circular motivic structures that are associated with the main characters but are expressed by subsidiary personas. Indeed, the apprentices at the tavern make repeated declarations to their "immortal" soul, referencing the Doctor. The very first mention of smell is made in this section as well. "Smelling, stinking, and reeking" are narrative signifiers of temporal predestination that will have an important role in this scene, as well as in III/iii. A subtler allusion is uttered by an apprentice whose text reads: "for my own immortal soul ... stinketh of brandy wine ... it stinketh, and I know not ... wherefore. Wherefore is the world so dreary?"<sup>[43]</sup> The idea of stench is further developed at the end of this scene. However, the combinations of "immortal" and "stink," coupled with the "I know not wherefore" and "wherefore is the world so dreary," demonstrate another confused perception, juxtaposed between the two temporal planes. The Doctor's immortality motif as well as the stench are empirical notions of linear temporality, whereas the rhetorical question of "wherefore is the world so dreary" has a decidedly more metaphysical connotation, because the apprentice is unaware that he is experiencing a cyclical return of a future experience that is encapsulated by the stench that he will later know. A few lines later, this questioning uncertainty is textually elevated to a temporal predestination, when another apprentice states: "The whole wide world is rosy red! Brandy ... that is my life."<sup>[44]</sup> The words "whole wide world" are uttered by Wozzeck when he has noticed the "bloody moon," moments after which he drowns. Therefore, the predestined motif of red signifying doom, along with the same words—"whole wide world"—that Wozzeck states,

illustrates how this moment is prophetic of Wozzeck's own death.

[5] Towards the middle part of the scene, Wozzeck's agitation is rising, and he remarks, "why does not God put out the sun now? ... Woman! Woman! Woman is fire ... is fire! ... fire!"<sup>[45]</sup> This is a cyclical return to the second scene of the opening act, where Wozzeck, in his state of temporal suspension, saw fire after the sunset. In the present, he comes to associate woman, or more precisely Marie, as that destructive, burning catalyst. The sight of fire was the very first temporal suspension that Wozzeck experienced, so it is significant that that moment would be intrinsically tied to the most important act that Wozzeck will commit, which will single-handedly determine the course of the rest of the opera, ultimately leading to the temporal retrograde that will reset the entire narrative to begin again. At the same time as this event, Marie, Wozzeck, and the Drum Major all utter "On we go! On we go!" in quick succession, which acts as a subtle depiction of seemingly endless circles as the characters collectively express their awareness of the same cyclical repetition that they are a part of in the tavern as Marie dances with the Drum Major and Wozzeck observes them.<sup>[46]</sup>

In the middle section of the scene, Wozzeck is sitting; however, there is no stage direction to indicate that he is passively staring. Nevertheless, in a single, telling line of text—upon asking the time and receiving an answer—Wozzeck says: "I thought it was later still. The time seems very long in these pastimes ... ." <sup>[47]</sup> It acts as a small metaphysical implication to demonstrate Wozzeck's general temporal disparity. He is incapable of exclusive empirical temporality, so this line is a narrative interjection of this concept. But since Berg is quintessentially predisposed to symmetrical structures, Wozzeck's metaphysical utterance is balanced a few lines later with empirical imagery. The text of an apprentice reads: "And yet, if a wanderer who is leaning on the stream of time suddenly should have a vision of God in majestic wisdom, and asketh: Wherefore then is Man? ... Know that all is vanity that's worldly."<sup>[48]</sup> The "stream of time" text is highly indicative of the linear, chronological passage of time, like an empirical flow of water, as is, clearly, the "vanity that's worldly." This text has a distinctly Schopenhauerian flavor, as it seeks to quantify an empirical shortcoming, vanity, as a manifestation of the will. There is no metaphysical insight in the text that would specifically suggest a denial of the will. However, that would not be subtle enough for the intricacy of this opera. The final text of this monologue reads: "As for my soul, it stinks of brandy-wine ... ." <sup>[49]</sup> The inclusion of this single word—"stinks"—immediately sets up the text for the subsequent display of temporal predestination.

At the end of the scene, as Wozzeck sits, the Idiot approaches him and utters: "Joyful ... joyful ... and yet it reeks ... it reeks ... reeks of blood!"<sup>[50]</sup> This is a fascinating juncture in the narrative, for this moment acts as both an arrival and a departure. This scene has been injecting temporal predestination through various images of both stench and blood up to this point, but never at the same time until now. However, the Idiot's declaration has the added weight of being noticed by Wozzeck, whereas the latter does not appear to have noticed the musings of the apprentices earlier. The Idiot's words, therefore, are prophetic in their own right, especially when they elicit from Wozzeck the text: "Blood? ... blood, blood! There's a red mist before me ... . They all seem twisting ... and then ... rolling over each other ... ." <sup>[51]</sup> This event signifies the trifecta of predestined implications within the scene. Wozzeck has once again seen the color red, which is the last time he does so before the murder. Yet, there is a variation in this predetermined episode: it was not brought on by a temporal suspension. It was not necessary, as his vision into the metaphysical was coaxed by the Idiot. This anomaly is further developed in the following scene, II/v, when Wozzeck awakes from a dream, where the text reads: "And between them,

there is a flashing all the time ... just like a knife-blade ... like a glittering knife-blade!"<sup>[52]</sup> An inference can perhaps be made that the dream, which can act as a temporal suspension in its own right, was the catalyst that induced Wozzeck's second predestined notion of murder after the first, where Marie stated that it is better to have a knife in her than a hand on her. This becomes, then, the definitive course of action that Wozzeck is now on the cusp of achieving.

In the second scene of act three, Wozzeck and Marie are outside on the fateful evening that has been prophetically anticipated from the start of the opera. The very first reference to what will transpire comes from Wozzeck's text, which reads: "... It's still, here in the darkness."<sup>[53]</sup> Once more, the stillness acts as an antithesis of the linear progression of time. However, the next image is of darkness, which is the signifier of the spiritual, metaphysical realm. Wozzeck knows that he is about to murder Marie, yet by invoking metaphysical imagery at this time, he is suggesting that Marie's metaphysical path has been temporally limitless—that she has essentially been dying for the whole opera from the first predestined insight—and also confined to the instant of her death. Wozzeck is aware of this phenomenon when he invokes a desire for "bliss" ("Seligkeit")<sup>[54]</sup> in a highly *Tristan*-like expression of metaphysical tranquility through undying love. In a few moments, when the moon rises blood red, to both of their perceptions, he murders Marie, with his final word of the scene being "Dead!" ("Tot!") The stillness of the scene's beginning has given way to darkness and ultimately death, the event of this one scene's dialogue acting as a microcosm of the entire opera's narrative—and by extension, temporal—development up to this point.

[6] Marie's death may have been the narrative climax of the opera, but the cyclical structure that unequivocally implies the opera's doomed temporal repetition has not yet arrived. The third scene of act three opens with cyclical reiterations. The reintroduction of the word "reek" ("stinkt"), uttered by Wozzeck, acts as both a return and a predestined signifier. When he addresses the character Margret, Wozzeck exclaims, "you're hot as fire. But wait ... till you're cold also!"<sup>[55]</sup> This is another reiteration of II/ii, when Wozzeck presented the same metaphor of the two temporal planes. Back in the present, at the end of III/iii, the final iteration of stench, as brought back by Wozzeck earlier in the scene, fulfilling the Idiot's prophecy, has its final narrative injection when Wozzeck is accused of smelling of human blood.<sup>[56]</sup> This moment gives way to the opera's penultimate scene, where Wozzeck's fate is nearly sealed with the cyclical return of his text from I/ii, which now again reads: "Still ... all is still ... and dead!"<sup>[57]</sup> These words were first spoken after Wozzeck's first temporal suspension and, like before, now also signify the close of the circle of that temporal predestination, implying the pending termination of his own empirical progression of time. Wozzeck becomes aware of the bloody, red moon one final time, which definitively seals his fate, albeit with one final textual retrograde in the text that reads: "Must then the whole wide world be blabbing it?"<sup>[58]</sup> This closes the circle on the prophetic declaration of "the whole wide world," spoken by an apprentice in II/iii, who says the "whole wide world is rosy red," as it is not so for Wozzeck, who drowns in a pool of moonlit, bloody redness. The scene does not end there, however. In a quintessentially Bergian construct, the narrative brings back the Captain and the Doctor for the sole purpose of having the Captain's very last word be "schnell" ("quick"),<sup>[59]</sup> closing the palindromic circle with a touch of irony by negating the Captain's temporal obsession with his final line.

What follows this scene is the emphatic orchestral interlude that lays the framework for the most important and large-scale palindrome: The repetition of the entire opera.<sup>[60]</sup> It is worth reiterating the interpretation of Berg's attitude towards palindromes and that to him, they represent a desired negation of inexorable temporality. Jarman accentuates the inherent pessimism behind

this Bergian conviction by noting how “trapped in an inescapable cycle of time, the characters of *Wozzeck* inhabit a mechanistic universe. It is, as the mechanically repeating ostinati that represent the croaking of the toads around the pool before and after Wozzeck’s death demonstrate, a universe that continues on its predetermined course untouched by the human tragedy that unfolds.”<sup>[61]</sup> With these ideals in mind, the final D minor interlude of *Wozzeck* can be seen in a new light: As Misha Donat suggests, this purely orchestral section before the final scene acts as an “overture,” implying the circular close with the repetition of time that starts in the final scene with the orphaned child of Wozzeck taking his father’s place and reliving the entire tragic temporal narrative anew.<sup>[62]</sup> The temporal repeat at the end of the opera does indeed imply that the boy will take over his father’s fate, but that does not mean that every other character is also destined to experience a temporal repetition. The temporal suspensions within the opera suggested that the empirical and metaphysical realms are superimposed over one another and that the narrative decides which realm is currently being resided in. Wozzeck was the primary source of the opera’s temporal suspensions, and precisely because not every character experienced them, an awareness—albeit a confusing one—of the two temporal planes was simply beyond many characters. This spared them from the fate that Wozzeck passed on to his son. The smaller palindromes, such as with the Captain in the opening scene, imply small-scale cyclical returns. Yet, the Captain breaks his personal narrative cycle by saying “quick” at the end, thereby releasing himself from the large-scale, total repeat. It is the music at the end of the opera that implies the boy taking his father’s place, as Berg intended.

The composer himself was aware of the temporal repetition that his palindrome caused at the end of the opera. He mentions how the repetitive figure in the final bars of the opera “creates the feeling that it could keep going. In fact, it does keep going! The first measures of the opera might well link up harmonically with these final measures without further ado, thus closing the circle.”<sup>[63]</sup> Indeed, Berg further expresses his awareness of the other most glaring narrative palindrome, namely the opera’s opening scene, noting how “the music does justice to the dramatic layout of this scene, which returns to its beginning at the end.”<sup>[64]</sup>

A final note on the cyclical nature of temporality in the *Wozzeck* libretto is Berg’s incorporation of the time of day in every single scene change description. This does not merely draw attention to the passage of time but rather implies the antithesis of the temporal stasis of the metaphysical plane. Temporal suspensions occur throughout the narrative, but they are fleeting moments that do not displace the linear chronology of time. A cyclical pattern is certainly evident from the perpetual repetition of sunrise, midday, sunset, night, and back to sunrise. The repetition further implies that the cycle is inevitable and therefore unbreakable, denoting the predetermination of temporality repeating itself at the end of the opera. In his directions on the staging of *Wozzeck*, Berg takes care to describe strict adherence to the variety of these natural, circular events within a day, implying its essential importance to the narrative atmosphere. He clearly states: “It is also important to observe the time of day in which a scene takes place. Whether it is day (or night) must be clearly apparent.”<sup>[65]</sup>

[7] As far as justifying a temporal analysis of *Wozzeck* (and later *Lulu*) from the perspective of the libretto instead of the score is concerned, it is necessary to remember that for his two libretti, Berg had uninhibitedly appropriated the texts in terms of form and content to fit both his theatrical and narrative needs. Therefore, a textual emphasis over the musical one should not be refuted when investigating Berg’s representations of his operas’ temporal meaning from the perspective of the text existing in an altered form that Berg adjusted to homogenize with the music. The composer validates this point by confirming that “the necessity of creating a libretto

by selecting from among Büchner's twenty-six loose and partly fragmentary scenes, avoiding repetitions that were not musically susceptible to variation, bringing these scenes together, placing them in order and dividing them into acts presented me, whether I liked it or not, with a task that was more musical than literary—a task that could only be fulfilled with laws of musical architecture, not with those of dramaturgy."<sup>[66]</sup>

The overarching temporal schemes in *Wozzeck* are emphatic of Berg's narrative vision for his opera, but like everything else, they are autobiographical in nature. This last notion concerns Berg's overall personality, not solely his states of mind and being while composing his first opera. Berg's overt romanticism and identification with Wagnerian metaphysics, as seen in *Tristan und Isolde*, influenced the tenets of his psyche, which found their most poetic and authentic voice in his private letters to Hanna Fuchs (1896–1964)—his Wagnerian muse and the object of his obsession in the last decade of his life. It is helpful to recount the most salient details of the few extant letters that Berg sent to Hanna. The thematic scope of *Wozzeck*'s temporality will surely be seen as a mirror of these musings.

Berg's evocations of temporality and metaphysics are presented in a stream of consciousness, deliberately out of context, to illustrate his profound preoccupation with these ideals as narrative concepts that would find representation in both of his operas, but specifically in *Wozzeck*:

"I am no longer myself since this greatest of events. I have become a madman staggering about with an ever pounding heart, to whom everything, yes, everything that once moved him, that brought him either joy or pain—from the purely material to the most spiritual things—has become completely indifferent, inexplicable, even hateful"<sup>[67]</sup> "... that there is an unbreakable spiritual bond between us for all eternity, we can take in good conscience upon us."<sup>[68]</sup> "The blissful half-hour and whole eternity of *that* morning ... "<sup>[69]</sup> [Berg here expresses eternity as temporally boundless and simultaneously condensed to an instant.] "If only to speak to you with one glance of the everlastingness of my love—then all the sorrows of my leftover life would be transfigured by a gleam of indescribable beauty."<sup>[70]</sup> "A passion comparable only to that of *Tristan and Isolde*, of *Pelleas and Melisande*. Except that we do not yield to it but merely note that fate has set in motion what was predetermined for us long ago."<sup>[71]</sup> "Loving each other eternally ... everlasting, immortal love."<sup>[72]</sup> "Obviously I have no thought of 'ending it all,' for one can do that with a human life, but not with the spirit of love."<sup>[73]</sup> "A chance to send you, my only beloved, an outward sign! Is that needed? When no day, no half-day, no night passes during which I do not think of you; think of you in love; in love as on the first day—traversing all the phases of earthly and celestial passion."<sup>[74]</sup> "But it is true only of a persona that is merely an altogether external layer of me, a part that in the course of the last years has separated from my true self ... as which I may appear to my surroundings and the world at large ... . That I am nevertheless doing so [composing *Lulu*] should prove to you that the other being ... —that I still exist! ... I am with my real self when I am with you in thought ... despite space and time that divide us ... be forever indivisible ... regardless of whether this separation by time and space will ever be abolished in this life."<sup>[75]</sup> "How many more years—before the eternity that is ours???"<sup>[76]</sup>

In the majority of these quotations—and particularly in the final ones—Berg presents himself as a being of two temporal planes, especially when he juxtaposes his "external layer" with his "real self." Notions of eternity and immortality—the Captain and Doctor's obsessions—find motivic expression in Berg's thoughts, as well as the metaphysical Wagnerian transcendence of love, which he even equates to *Tristan*. He speaks of the empirical and metaphysical dichotomy when addressing the "earthly and celestial passion," as well as notions of predestination—all of which are motivically inherent within his operas. In a Schopenhauerian sense, it is clear that Berg is expressing feelings of empirical captivity and turmoil and wishing the absolution of metaphysical transcendence. This is particularly clear when he acknowledges the implications of space and time upon his desires. Incidentally, when he first writes "space and time" and then, a moment later, "time and space," he presents the phrase as a possibly subconscious palindrome, thus



negating the concept and liberating the denial of his metaphysical will. Berg's mathematical exactitude with all forms of expression cannot preclude this from being a possibility—especially when he is musing so intently on spiritual declamations. The essential meaning of these letters to Hanna is to convey Berg's inherent temporal ideology and to reiterate the ever-present autobiographical element within all of his music, especially his operas. Indeed, Silvio dos Santos concurs that "Berg understood his existence in the real world as mere representation of himself: his real self lies in a metaphysical world where his true love can manifest itself. By stating that the affair [with Hanna] could only be measured in terms of eternity, for example, Berg alludes to the suspension of time (eternity by definition has no beginning or end) as a state of permanence in time, both of which are part of the notion of uninterrupted continuity."<sup>[77]</sup> The temporal implications of *Wozzeck* and *Lulu* could not be as profound as they were if their composer had not personally identified with each and every expression of time within those operas.



**Figure 2: Dietrich Trude,**

**Josef von Manowarda-Jana as *Wozzeck* (March 30, 1930);  
Performance at the Vienna State Opera, Staging: Lothar Wallerstein  
By courtesy of Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, [Bildarchiv Austria](#)**



# Lulu

[8] Concepts of temporality in Berg's second opera, *Lulu*, predominantly concern fate and its circular manifestations throughout the narrative for all of the primary characters. Just as scholars focus overwhelmingly on the early scenes of *Wozzeck*, they also identify one pivotal moment in *Lulu* as the epitome of temporality in that opera: the Film Music Interlude (FMI) of Act II. Indeed, this moment in the narrative acts as the point that evenly bisects the opera and instigates a complete and multifaceted retrograde to the end of the piece. However, as the libretto will again attest, there are certainly other, subtler temporal indications that cannot be overlooked in the endeavor to discern notions of time in this opera.

The FMI, though, is a suitable point of departure from which to expand to the peripheries of the opera. Jarman succinctly and effectively summarizes its essence:

A tumultuous, flickering orchestral interlude accompanies a silent film depicting, in its first half, Lulu's arrest, trial, sentence, and imprisonment. The second half of the film depicts the means of her escape from prison: her catching cholera from Countess Geschwitz, her transfer to the isolation hospital, and the substitution of the Countess for Lulu. Both the music and the accompanying film have a palindromic structure (the music running backwards from the middle, while the sequence of shots in the second half of the film corresponds to those in the first in reverse order) as a symbol of this crucial turning point in both Lulu's career and in the opera itself.<sup>[78]</sup>

George Perle corroborates the fact that the FMI in the opera is the narrative bridge between the two Frank Wedekind plays that Berg adapted for his opera. The events that take place in the FMI were never portrayed in Wedekind's texts but only mentioned.<sup>[79]</sup> This detail justifies the notion that, like in *Wozzeck*, Berg appropriated the dramatic text to fit his operatic needs, further justifying the notion that the narrative structure and chronological (and temporal) development of the operas were devised more by Berg than by the texts that he set to music. Santos concurs on this point, providing an example of how in *Lulu* Berg "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."<sup>[80]</sup> Carl Dahlhaus argued that "Wedekind's dialogue technique—the shifted replicas, the lopsided parts of the conversation in which people's alienation from each other is evident, the forward and backward references, and the hidden barbs embedded in a conversation that is unbiased on the surface—has almost no traces in Berg's remaining text version, without calling it a mere trivialization of the drama to the libretto."<sup>[81]</sup> Dahlhaus also maintained that "Berg's text version aims at an unambiguous interpretation, which Wedekind, as a genuine playwright, simply tried to avoid. And indeed, Berg oriented himself, as if secretly relating *Lulu* to *Wozzeck*."<sup>[82]</sup> Furthermore, Berg "makes a concerted effort to highlight her [Geschwitz's] interaction with Lulu's portrait, which is significantly different from Wedekind."<sup>[83]</sup> Berg himself confirmed in a letter to Schoenberg the difficulties he had in adapting the text, noting that "since I have to cut four fifths of the Wedekind original, selection of the remaining fifth is torture enough."<sup>[84]</sup>

The opera (and libretto by extension), opens with the temporally significant Prologue, where the Animal Tamer presents a monologue to the audience in front of the lowered curtain. Similarly to *Wozzeck*, *Lulu*, from its opening moments, establishes a temporal paradigm that will have repercussions in the most decisive moments of the operatic narrative. Michel Fano makes a compelling comparison between the opening scene of *Wozzeck* and the *Lulu* Prologue, noting how their cyclical structures and narrative details denote "the two directions that unfold: past-

future and future-past, which is also the subject of *Lulu's* Prologue.”<sup>[85]</sup> Fano maintains that the cyclical nature implies that the two scenes in question never even existed, as they fold back onto themselves, as in an “airlock.” And for that reason, neither scene can be a part of the drama, because they represent action that takes place simultaneously before and after the narrative proper. Similarly, in the opening scene of *Wozzeck*, according to Fano another proto-prologue, the action takes place in the early morning, which is a specific time of day that is not seen again in the opera, implying that it takes place outside of the narrative scope.<sup>[86]</sup> Furthermore, Misha Donat interestingly posits a lack of subtlety in *Lulu* that was inherently implied in *Wozzeck*, suggesting that “although it is fascinating to note that Berg omitted from Büchner’s play those scenes which specifically present man as a trained animal—only to take up this theme in his second opera—the view of life as a tragic circus is implicit in *Wozzeck* as it is explicit in *Lulu*.”<sup>[87]</sup> The Prologue represents time in a nebulous way by setting up the personification of the animal menagerie. This event is outside of the narrative’s scope of time, implying a metaphysical character. However, the direct appeal to the audience in attendance at the opera to follow implies an appeal to the empirical realm of reality. The lines of the two temporal realms are certainly blurred in the Prologue. Furthermore, by describing the animals in his menagerie, and then by having Lulu herself carried out and described as a snake, the Animal Tamer equates the other operatic characters with the animals he is describing in his holdings. Lulu’s puppet-like presence outside the narrative—dressed in the Pierrot costume she will be wearing in the subsequent opening scene—acts as a temporal suspension. Indeed, she is presented onstage like a sedated animal, or a transfigured being, experiencing a metaphysical episode that will have implications in the future. The Animal Tamer certainly defines her in a predatory fashion, exclaiming how “she as the root of all evil was created; to snare us, to mislead us she was fated, and to murder, with no clue left on the spot.”<sup>[88]</sup> In the next stanza of the monologue, the Tamer directly addresses Lulu, saying: “My sweetest beast, please don’t be what you’re not!”<sup>[89]</sup> These lines are replete with temporal predestination, firstly by describing the fate that Lulu’s character would inflict. The label of “beast” is reiterated by Lulu in a description of herself in the second scene of Act I. In that instance, temporal ambiguity is evident when Schigolch addresses Lulu for the first time by her name (and remains the only character in the entire opera to do so), to which she replies, “For centuries, no one has ever called me Lulu.” When Schigolch replies by asking her what she is, she answers: “A beast.”<sup>[90]</sup> The ambiguity that is demonstrated by her enigmatic text, as well as her self-identification, references back to the Prologue and the Animal Tamer’s definition of Lulu’s true identity. As befitting her temporal suspension in the Prologue, Lulu’s conversation with Schigolch reflects a truth that perhaps she herself is not fully aware of as an individual who straddles both temporal planes. The Tamer’s other temporally predestined line of “don’t be what you’re not” foreshadows Lulu’s famous lied in Act II, scene 1, when she is defending her nature to Dr. Schön by saying, “I have not asked in my life to appear in another color than the one which I am known to have.”<sup>[91]</sup> Lulu’s reply here is significant not only because she reiterates the Animal Tamer’s metaphysical advice to her but because she uses animal imagery when describing her true colors, once more admitting that she is, at her most authentic, a beast.

[9] From these examples, it is clear that the Prologue sets the dualistic temporality of the whole operatic narrative, where, as Perle posits, the narrative is truly an opera within an opera, and utilizes palindromic textual returns to this Prologue. According to Perle, “ultimately Alwa becomes, as he himself says in the play, ‘a martyr to his profession,’ hopelessly involved as a participant in the very drama that should have been the subject of his greatest achievement as an artist—a victim, like all the others, of Lulu, and murdered at last in her garret in London as a

direct consequence of his attachment to her. Thus the drama of which we are a witness is itself a subject of that drama."<sup>[92]</sup> Perle further maintains that "it is Alwa who speaks in the Prologue, in the person of the Animal Tamer, and he speaks for the author of the drama and the composer of the opera. It is *us*, the audience, whom he invites to see the beasts in his menagerie, and it is *us*, as well as the characters on stage, whom his [Alwa's] first words, 'May I come in?,' address, when he enters in his own person at the rise of the curtain on Act I."<sup>[93]</sup> Misha Donat notes how the "Animal Tamer's Prologue to *Lulu* (the end of which is again musically a retrograde version of its start) is based on a structure of methods of vocal declamation, from speech to *Sprechgesang* to song, and back in reverse order to speech, the Prologue ending with the same spoken words with which it began."<sup>[94]</sup> Thus, Berg ends the opening sections of both of his operas with single-word, textual, cyclical symmetry.

Within the totality of the operatic narrative of *Lulu*, there is one particular symbol of imagery that defines the temporal fate of every major (and in many cases minor) character, including Lulu herself: Lulu's portrait. Every single scene change description in the opera contains two elements: the portrait (apart from the opera's final scene) and a physical description of the room. These descriptions preface each scene with a balanced implication of the two temporal planes. The portrait therefore bares the same significance to *Lulu* that the time of day did in every scene description in *Wozzeck*: it presents a chronological yet circular cycle of predetermined temporality. But whereas that temporality in *Wozzeck* was decidedly empirical, Lulu's unchanging, static portrait has the stature of metaphysical eternity.

The portrait of Lulu painted at the beginning of the opera has a quasi-supernatural effect on the people who behold it. It has a reverse Dorian Gray effect, because it is the portrait that is timeless, onto which Lulu's admirers project their dependence and idealism, more so than onto Lulu herself. Even at the end of the opera, when Lulu has fallen into the depths of degradation, Countess Geschwitz still lovingly looks upon the portrait, reaffirming the shackles of her doomed fate, as was predestined in the Prologue. The timeless allure of the portrait therefore represents the timeless, fatal attraction of Lulu herself. The portrait follows the narrative throughout the entire opera, acting as an anchor, whose purpose is to continually reaffirm the paradigm of what it represents. And precisely because the portrait survives at the end of the opera and is acknowledged in the final scene, the potential exists for a temporal repetition of future seductions and personal projections upon it. After all, no character other than Schigolch calls Lulu by her real name, implying again that her identity is purely in the eye of the beholder, suggesting that her portrait too is not, in fact, a likeness of just one woman but of all or any women, the personification of corrupting and destructive temptation. The portrait in its physical form is, ultimately, the empirical manifestation of Lulu's metaphysical identity, as exemplified by the Animal Trainer in the Prologue. The portrait is also a metaphysical doorway for all who behold it to glean momentary temporal suspension. Indeed, the majority of the temporally predestined declarations occur in the immediate aftermath of beholding the portrait. The characters who look at it are seeing within it the true Lulu as the Animal Tamer described her. And in that moment of temporal suspension, they at once recognize their doomed inability to resist Lulu. In the end, Lulu's portrait, instigating a narrative retrograde like the one found at the end of *Wozzeck*, would not be unthinkable in view of Berg's love of cyclical structures.

In the second scene of Act I, in the same dialogue with Schigolch where Lulu first identifies herself as a beast, Schigolch presents a temporal predestination of Act III, scene 2, when he expresses (in Act I) how much he would rather "give up all prospect of heaven for hereafter, than leave my Lulu on earth in depravation, and unhappy."<sup>[95]</sup> This is, of course, precisely what her fate

entails, but the duality of heaven (a transcendent or metaphysically unearthly realm) and the empirical earth is an interesting preface to Lulu's self-identification as a beast. It is as if invoking temporal imagery motivated Lulu to express a personal truism. Later in the same scene, the stage direction for Alwa reads: "Involuntarily his look dwells on Lulu's picture."<sup>[96]</sup> The irresistible allure of the portrait is implied with this direction, as is Alwa's increasing dependency on Lulu/her portrait, and ultimately his fatal inability to reject the siren's song.

[10] The following scene (I/iii) is a crucial moment that blurs the lines of the temporal realms again and projects autobiographic elements of Berg's life. In a reference to the empirical audience that the Animal Tamer spoke to in the Prologue, Lulu's dialogue with Alwa includes her text, which reads: "You know, you have written the music for such a dance. And some of the audience out there are starting to think about it. I feel they are, even though I can't see them."<sup>[97]</sup> This line is in reference to Berg altering the text in order to project himself as Alwa—his doppelgänger within the opera—and make him a composer, instead of a writer as Wedekind originally portrayed him. Alwa extends this projection by exclaiming: "Couldn't some clever composer take her [Lulu's] story and make an opera from it? (Standing in front of the portrait.) It's the same sort of howling as in a zoo when they put the food in front of the animals."<sup>[98]</sup> These lines of Lulu and Alwa evoke the two temporal planes in multiple ways: The association with Berg himself in empirical reality is profound when Alwa wonders if an opera about Lulu could be written, while the orchestra plays a few notes of *Wozzeck* to suggest that Berg had already written an opera about Lulu in the real world. Alwa's reference to the zoo and animals references the metaphysical menagerie of the Prologue. The crucial detail here is that Alwa makes these exclamations essentially to the portrait, as if addressing Lulu through it, and by extension fully projects the notion of the opera within an opera and the duality of the temporal planes via the portrait's suggestive power. Alwa's stage directions in these passages note how he is "indicating her portrait," and "again indicating the portrait."<sup>[99]</sup> One gets the impression that Berg himself is expressing this text from his composer's desk in reality.

Later in the same scene, the Prince projects his own infatuation with Lulu but does so through the allure of the portrait, as the stage direction for him concurs that he is "engrossed by the sight of Lulu, as though looking at a picture [of her]."<sup>[100]</sup> In the closing lines of Act I, an exchange of temporal predestination ensues between Lulu and Dr. Schön when she dictates to him the text of the letter that he is writing to break off his engagement to another woman. Dr. Schön prophetically notes how this is emphatic of "my own death sentence" and that "I feel the axe falling."<sup>[101]</sup> He is indeed murdered by Lulu at the conclusion of the following scene, which brings Dr. Schön's predestined temporal circle to a close. Lulu's final dooming line of Act I states, as she dictates the letter in Schön's name: "It's useless to think you can save me!"<sup>[102]</sup> In the context of what is to come, this last line could alternately be read: "It's useless to think you can survive me."

The first scene of Act II includes further allusions to the opening scene of *Wozzeck* made through Berg's projection of himself in *Lulu*: Alwa. In a dialogue with Lulu, justifying his attraction to her, he declares, "I am also flesh and blood!" A few lines later, when Lulu apologizes for hurting him, he asks, "You promise me that forever?"<sup>[103]</sup> The word "forever" is comparable to the Captain's text "eternity," whereas "flesh and blood" is spoken by *Wozzeck* when he too is justifying an intrinsic element of his character to a less-than-sympathetic audience. This is an example of Berg's autobiographical appropriation of the libretto to bridge the temporal planes again and insert himself once more into the narrative by combining elements of the two characters he identifies himself with in his operas. Alwa's euphoric state of ecstasy continues, and as he holds

Lulu's hand, one can imagine Berg doing the same with Hanna, as they both exclaim to their metaphysical loves through Alwa's text: "Just a spirit, far in the next world and rubbing the sleep away."<sup>[104]</sup> Such poetic nostalgia is certainly reminiscent of the temporal musings concerning metaphysical planes about which Berg wrote in his letters to Hanna. Alwa's text also acts as a temporal predestination of his death in the opera's final scene, as he speaks here of sleep in the next world.

At the end of the first scene, Lulu stages her personal defense to Dr. Schön in the prophetic, bestial iteration of the Animal Tamer, where she justifies her true identity to Schön and, moments later, fulfills the Animal Tamer's temporal predestination of Lulu as murderess by killing Schön. Likewise, in his own display of temporal predestination, Schön beholds Lulu's portrait one final time, linking himself to the metaphysical realm, and says to Alwa: "Don't let her escape now. You are her next one ... ." <sup>[105]</sup>

At the end of Act II, scene 1, the FMI occurs, and Berg notes in the stage directions: "The film sequence—in accordance with the symmetrical course of the music—should also be quasi-symmetrical (i.e., it should run forwards and then backwards)."<sup>[106]</sup> Perle concurs with this assessment, adding that "the opera as a whole comprises two 'parts,' each consisting of one complete act and half of another. Thus the division into three acts is secondary, the primary formal break being marked not by an intermission, as are the breaks between the acts, but by an Interlude between the two scenes of Act II. The true 'finales' of the work occur at the conclusion of each 'part,' rather than at the conclusion of each act."<sup>[107]</sup> Adorno, likewise, contributes to this notion of the opera being in two parts when he says that "time is interpreted according to what happens in it, by rising and falling destiny, and is held together by that rhythm. That is why the form of the *ostinato*, the film music—the work's caesura and its innermost reflection—is in strict retrograde: time passes and revokes itself and nothing points beyond it but the gesture of those who love without hope."<sup>[108]</sup> Later on, Berg himself will use a similar analogy of rising and falling, as Adorno put it, to describe the dualistic nature of the bisected opera on opposite sides of the FMI. Even within the film, Berg insists that Lulu's portrait be included as "shadows" and "reflections"<sup>[109]</sup> at the exact moment that the interlude, and subsequently the opera, becomes a massive palindrome of negation. Furthermore, the FMI constitutes an entire year that is linearly summarized and then repeated in retrograde, thereby expressing the duality of time as being both infinite and instant through the cyclical nature that shows Lulu outside of prison at the start and finish. Her existence outside the prison represents the temporal instant and eternity, or in this specific case, one year's time, epitomized within the cycle proper.

[11] In the second scene of Act II, the temporal planes are again blurred with a reference that the Acrobat makes to Alwa to suggest the opera-within-an-opera element, when he says: "You've composed a melodrama in which my fiancée's two legs have the principle roles and which no decent theatre will put on."<sup>[110]</sup> Berg, via Alwa, empirically parodies himself in this moment by noting the censorship that the Wedekind plays experienced, with a reference to the scandalously dubious nature of his own opera. This scene has a pivotal place within the narrative, because it is the first scene in the aftermath of the large-scale retrograde. Although Lulu's portrait is physically present in the scene, it is off the easel and facing inward, representing Lulu's fall and momentary absence. The stage directions associated with the portrait have the characters repeatedly "glancing at the empty easel," imagining both Lulu and the pre-retrograde world of relative tranquility. Indeed, rather quickly after Lulu reemerges, in her weakened state, she utters the nostalgic remark: "That reminds me of the days long departed. And where is my portrait?"<sup>[111]</sup> Lulu is aware of the diametrically opposed situation that she now faces and longingly pines for



her pre-retrograde life, punctuated by her desire to know where her portrait is to salvage through it any remnants of prior influence that she held. In a further effort to reestablish old paradigms, she inquires of Alwa, "And didn't you look at it when I was absent?"<sup>[112]</sup> Perle concurs with this notion of pre-retrograde yearnings by noting that Lulu "has crossed that threshold in time beyond which every present action and thought derives its quality from memory and the past. The remainder of her life, everything that she is to experience in the second of the two Lulu plays, is a *recherche du temps perdu*, and this will be reflected in the music of Part Two of the opera."<sup>[113]</sup> In an effort to both placate Lulu and reaffirm some semblance of the past, Alwa puts the portrait back on its easel throne and remarks: "You're still the same as in the portrait he made of you."<sup>[114]</sup> Alwa's continued subordination to the portrait, now within the context of the retrograde, bares an even greater irrationality that is prophetically marching towards his own inevitable demise. He goes so far as to admit her treacherous inclinations by stating that "if it were not for your two childlike eyes I look into, I should say you were the most designing of whores and bitches who ever inveigled a man to his doom." Yet he is powerless to resist, and with another glance at the portrait he succumbs once again and, reiterating Lulu's words, exclaims that they'll be "together, just when we want to!"<sup>[115]</sup> This is a fascinating detail here, in that Lulu and Alwa say that they can be together when they want to instead of where they want to. Coupled with his idealization from beholding the portrait, Alwa is imagining a Tristan-like metaphysical transcendence through (illusory) love by projecting his desires onto the portrait. Lulu has no desire to share a metaphysical love with Alwa, and in a supreme display of indifference that confirms the impossibility of Alwa's projection, Lulu asks the love-struck Alwa, in her final text of Act II: "Isn't this the sofa on which your father bled to death?"<sup>[116]</sup>

The first scene of Act III has the narrative function of setting up Lulu and her companions' precipitous fall. For the first time in the entire opera, the scene description for the opening of scene two—the final scene—does not convey Lulu's portrait. The lack of the portrait in the scene description implies Lulu's complete loss of metaphysical power and pending demise, as the only descriptions are of an empirical nature, signifying the near completion of the retrograde circle. However, in a significant occurrence, the Countess Geschwitz reemerges with the portrait. For the first time, Lulu expresses hostility towards her image, exclaiming: "It's me! Don't let me see it. Throw it outside on the street!"<sup>[117]</sup> Lulu senses the inevitability of fate upon her now and is no longer yearning for the pre-retrograde existence that the portrait represents for her. Yet, for Alwa, his fate—and, by extension, his doom—is intrinsically tied to the portrait, for as the tragic anti-Tristan figure that he is, he is incapable of withholding his metaphysical projections upon beholding the painting, regardless of how dire his situation is. When he is reintroduced to the portrait, where his stage direction reads, "Suddenly with new animation," he remarks, "With this picture before me, I feel my self-respect is recovered. I understand the fate which compels me." The stage direction after this last sentence reads "somewhat elegiac,"<sup>[118]</sup> implying perhaps that at some level of conscious or subconscious awareness, but certainly no such awareness as to redirect his destiny, Alwa is resigned to whatever may befall him now. Santos expands on this point by noting that "Alwa's gazing at Lulu's portrait suggests a sort of metaphysical guilt ... and the consciousness that he had been living in a dream world."<sup>[119]</sup> But these are all fleeting implications, as Lulu's three remaining spiritual acolytes wax nostalgic over her portrait.

In a final allusion to the pre-retrograde life that they all shared to a degree, Schigolch mutters, "Any man she falls in the hands of today could never form a conception of what our existence was."<sup>[120]</sup> All subsequent declarations from this point forth express near-instant temporal predestinations of death. When Lulu descends to find her next gentleman client, Alwa exclaims,



"You shan't go down again there, not while I'm living," to which Geschwitz chimes in, telling Lulu, "I'll go with you wherever you go."<sup>[121]</sup> Both lines are prophetic in that Alwa will momentarily no longer be living when the Negro client murders him, and Geschwitz's line is a symbolic variation of her pending *Liebestod*. After the Negro strikes Alwa on the head, killing him outright, he says to the dead man, "Lovely dreams are coming," and then to Lulu, "Dreams of you!"<sup>[122]</sup> This image of dreaming temporally predetermines Geschwitz's fate a short while later. However, this moment also brings Alwa's temporal circle to a close, fulfilling his prophetic exclamation of rubbing sleep away in the next world from Act II, scene 1, when Schigolch states that the dead Alwa will "sleep till he feels recovered,"<sup>[123]</sup> implying that he will awaken and rub the sleep away in the next, metaphysical world. Following Alwa's death, Geschwitz reemerges and generally observes, "how dark it is in here," to which Schigolch prophetically replies, "it will get much darker."<sup>[124]</sup>

[12] In one of the most poignantly tragic moments in the entire operatic repertoire, Geschwitz is evaluating her life and fatefully utters to herself how "if she [Lulu] should see me lying here in my blood, she wouldn't shed one tear for me."<sup>[125]</sup> She contemplates suicide, but just before emotionally committing to the task, she remembers Lulu's portrait and brings herself before it, as if praying to a religious icon, and says, "Let me just once, then, for one last time, address that heart within you. Be kind to me! Be kind to me!" The stage direction then states that she "remains in that position."<sup>[126]</sup> This is the last direct mention of the portrait in the opera and the last, false metaphysical projection onto Lulu that will be elicited from gazing upon it. Perle appropriately describes this moment with Geschwitz "as though the passage of time has stopped for her since she uttered these words,"<sup>[127]</sup> expressing her state of being during her temporal suspension. Santos describes this moment as Geschwitz "realizing the impossibility of consummating her love in the physical world, [where] she longs for some sort of spiritual love. This form of love ... eventually becomes a metaphysical ideal expressed in her final *Liebestod*."<sup>[128]</sup>

In the next moment, Jack (the Ripper) enters with Lulu and comments on how the transfixed Geschwitz is "in love with you," (to Lulu) and a "poor beast," which he observes as the stage direction instructs him to stroke her "hair as one strokes a dog."<sup>[129]</sup> The symbolism of "beast" is a reference back to the Animal Tamer's decree in the Prologue, doubly signifying the bridge over the two temporal realms, as well as the nearly closed retrograde circle to the beginning. The final lines of the opera are replete with empirical and metaphysical allusions. Now that Alwa is dead, Berg has lost his one autobiographical link to the narrative. However, Berg does not need Alwa to reference himself one final time. Previously, when Berg had blurred the temporal realms by alluding to himself, he had Alwa make subtle references to *Wozzeck*. And now, in the final seconds before the retrograde comes full circle with the death of Lulu, Jack utters the words, "We don't need light, there's moonlight."<sup>[130]</sup> The significance of the word moonlight cannot be overstated. The moon was one of the most profound temporal signifiers in *Wozzeck*, and its presence was intrinsically tied to both Marie's and Wozzeck's deaths. Therefore, in invoking this particular imagery in the seconds before the namesake of his second opera dies, Berg closes his own personal empirical circle by reminding the world that these are his operas, and that they will undergo narrative closure in the manner of his choosing. As if this were not enough, Lulu's figurative, subconscious acceptance of her fate is signified with her very last words of the opera, (excluding the no, no, nos), "Please don't keep me waiting any longer," to which Jack, implying that he is prepared to kill her, exclaims: "I'm quite ready."<sup>[131]</sup> However, Lulu's death is not the very next act, as one final temporally predestined signifier is expressed in the stage direction for

Geschwitz, which states that she is “alone, as if in a dream.”<sup>[132]</sup> Like Alwa’s dream of death and Lulu at the hands of the Negro, so too will the Countess dream the same things in a few moments. After this, Lulu is murdered, and Jack stabs Geschwitz upon leaving. Lulu is murdered offstage, so Geschwitz is left dying alone onstage when she sings her heartbreaking *Liebestede*: “Lulu! My angel! Appear once more for me! For I am near, I’m always near. For evermore!”<sup>[133]</sup> It is clear that this plea is made to the portrait, as it is the only vestige of Lulu that is physically near Geschwitz in this moment. She has been near Lulu throughout the opera and now, in her final metaphysical projection—undoubtedly to the unmentioned portrait—expresses her eternal (yet unrequited) love. The final word of the opera, “evermore,” closes the temporal circle and fulfills the prophecy of doom for all participants in the metaphysical opera that the Animal Tamer introduced in the Prologue. Santos notes how “this is a special moment that distinguishes the opera from Wedekind’s *Die Büchse der Pandora*, where Lulu and Geschwitz share the stage at the moment of their deaths. In Berg’s version, only Lulu’s portrait is present onstage, as Lulu is killed in the adjacent chamber and does not return.”<sup>[134]</sup> In another distinction between the plays and the opera, Santos describes how “for Wedekind, given the untenable position of Geschwitz’s gender identity in the plays, the only solution for her tragedy would be to scorn at the entire drama, which is perhaps the reason he added the curse ‘O verflucht’ (Damn it) as Geschwitz dies. But Berg’s musical setting and the elimination of such a curse makes the meaning of her death more ambiguous. By sublimating the grotesque character of her attraction to Lulu and elevating her love to a metaphysical ideal, Berg suggests that the act of being in love transcends the physicality of the body.”<sup>[135]</sup>

A fascinating element of this final scene is that Berg doubled the roles of Lulu’s dead husbands from the first two acts with her clients in this scene. This phenomenon demonstrates circular symmetry but is not palindromic in structure. Two of the three clients kill members of Lulu’s circle, but there are three deaths in total, as Jack kills both Lulu and Geschwitz. Therefore, a symmetry exists between the dead husbands—the Medical Specialist, the Painter, and Schön—and Lulu’s followers—Alwa, Lulu, and Geschwitz. The lack of a palindromic retrograde implies that there will possibly not be a temporal negation of events. The full circle is completed only once, making the abrupt musical ending in *Lulu* different from *Wozzeck*: there is no perpetuation of Lulu’s tragedy, unlike *Wozzeck*’s. This further implies that *Wozzeck* is more of a treatise on society, because the same social structures will be in place to ensure that *Wozzeck*’s child experiences the same fate as his father. Conversely, *Lulu* is an isolated event, not meant to be viewed as a microcosm or paradigm for any perpetual temporal structure. Had Berg wanted to insinuate a repetition of time and events in *Lulu*, the character deaths in III/ii would have musically corresponding returns in their palindrome formation, whereby Alwa’s death as the first of his trio would have been associated with Schön—the third death of his respective trio. Likewise, Lulu’s death would have corresponded to the Painter’s music, and Geschwitz’s death to the Medical Specialist’s music. This palindromic configuration would, however, have weakened the integrity of the narrative, as it is, both theatrically and thematically, far more dramatically significant to pair Lulu’s death with Schön’s music. Therefore, even though it is not a palindrome, there is still inherent symmetry, which instigates a circular, large-form structure for the entire opera. Perle argues that a “*déjà vu* atmosphere, suggested throughout the opera, increasingly prevails in the final scene, until the staged events seem to be accompanied by a shadow of themselves in which the first half of the opera, culminating and concluding in the death of Dr. Schön, is reenacted in a nightmarish distortion. This, above all, is the meaning of the recapitulative design of *Lulu*.”<sup>[136]</sup>

[13] Berg himself came to the same conclusion regarding the symmetry of the husbands and clients in the same letter to Schoenberg (dated August 7, 1930), where he spoke about appropriating the Wedekind text: "The orchestral interlude [the FMI], which in my version *bridges* the gap between the last act of *Erdegeist* and the first of *Büchse der Pandora* [the two Lulu plays by Wedekind that Berg merged into his opera], 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. (Incidentally: the 4 men who visit Lulu in her attic room are to be portrayed in the opera by the same singers who fall victim to her in the first half of the opera. In reverse order, however.)"<sup>[137]</sup> Berg's letter is intriguing because he formulated the cyclical course of his operatic narrative in 1930, which was well before he had come to compose the final scene. Most significantly of all, he was well aware, even in those early stages, that *Lulu* was meant to be in two distinct parts: an ascent and a descent, demarcated by a central interlude that would trigger the retrograde.



**Figure 3: *Lulu*, Portrait**

**Photo of Evelyn Lear, Vienna State Opera (1963)  
By courtesy of Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, [Bildarchiv Austria](#)**

# Thoughts on *Lulu's* Possible Perpetual Repetition

Following the conclusion of *Lulu*, Jarman fascinatingly posits that, like in *Wozzeck*, *Lulu's* retrograde does, in fact, constitute a temporal repetition instead of a single negation to the beginning with no reprise of events. Jarman believes that “the survival of Schigolch suggests that we have seen only one episode in a continually repeating cycle of events.”<sup>[138]</sup> It is indeed fascinating—Schigolch was as seduced by Lulu and her portrait as any other character but possessed the single distinguishing feature of having been the only character to call Lulu by her real name. The question then becomes, Did Schigolch evade a tragic end by surviving, or does his survival at the end of the narrative imply that he is, indeed, somehow doomed to relive the past? And if so, whose past? His own, or another character's? One indication could be that the final notes of *Lulu* terminate abruptly and instantly in a repetitive figuration similar to that of *Wozzeck*. Yet that which made the ending of *Wozzeck* particularly tragic was the innocence of the child. He did not deserve his fate, and yet that is what awaits him. This is more of a reflection upon society's corrupting nature. In *Lulu*, no one is innocent. Furthermore, the interlude of variations preceding the final scene certainly does not create the impression of acting as an overture, like the final D minor interlude of *Wozzeck*. A more compelling narrative device than the one Schigolch used to instigate a temporal repeat would be Lulu's portrait. The corrupting power of the portrait was demonstrated even when Lulu herself was not in the vicinity. If, as the Animal Tamer in the Prologue implied, Lulu is a microcosm of the female gender, then her portrait is equally nondescript, thereby implying that anyone can behold it and metaphysically project upon it. If this notion was even remotely implied, then a perpetual temporal cycle could have been conceptually feasible. However, unlike *Wozzeck*, *Lulu* is not a social critique but rather an allegory of an individual's capriciousness when straddling a temporal duality and finding no salvation in either plane of existence. The tragedy of *Lulu* is not experiencing time repeating itself but falling into the void of oblivion as if one never even existed in the first place.

Another theory, albeit somewhat tenuous, is to consider Berg's concert aria for soprano and orchestra, *Der Wein*, as a different temporal representation of his Lulu character. The aria was considered to be Berg's study for *Lulu* in the same way that Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder* was for *Tristan und Isolde*. Adorno attested to this association between the aria and opera, noting that “the aria shapes a rebus full of the fatal significance one finds only in the language of and metaphors of Baudelaire; not until *Lulu*, for which this work seems the prolegomenon, is the rebus completely clarified.”<sup>[139]</sup> But what if Berg's aria was not just a study and instead was an actual part of *Lulu*? In a temporally tangential sense, *Der Wein* could be a cabaret aria that Lulu herself sings in performance, like she did at the end of Act I, scene 3 in the opera. The aria is certainly within the same sonic realm as *Lulu*, utilizing the same unique instrumentation (i.e., the alto saxophone), and incorporates jazz idioms that are indicative of a liberal cabaret atmosphere. George Perle concurs, noting that in *Der Wein* “as in *Lulu*, Berg employs piano and saxophone as integral components of the orchestra and for episodes in the standardized timbre of commercial popular music.”<sup>[140]</sup> Dave Headlam continues in this vein, citing how the “tango music from *Der Wein* returns as the English waltz in *Lulu*, and the chord at the center of the palindrome in *Der Wein* is the precursor to the central chord in the film music of the opera.”<sup>[141]</sup> Headlam draws one more comparison between the popular music in the opera and aria, stating that in Act I, scene 3 of the opera, “when Lulu faints and returns to her dressing room, the jazz band plays a ragtime juxtaposed with the orchestra playing, until the door is closed and the jazz music suddenly stops.

*Der Wein* also contains a section of similar popular music in its tango, associated in the text with gambling, drinking, and prostitution.”<sup>[142]</sup>

[14] The Baudelaire text that Berg used possessed what could be construed as temporal imagery, which certainly would not have been lost on Berg, as he broke off work on *Lulu* to compose the aria. The text included lines such as “Angels of eternal duration suffer feverish conflagration” and “let us, heart to heart, sister, like this, flee, brooking not rest nor delay to the land of my dreams, far away.”<sup>[143]</sup> Berg quoted this last line from *Der Wein* in a letter to Hanna Fuchs dated December 4, 1929, expressing how the imagery is about her.<sup>[144]</sup> Notions of eternity and dream realms represent metaphysical imagery in *Lulu*, so perhaps the aria’s “Lulu” is singing of her other self that inhabits the narrative realms of the opera. Despite Berg having composed the aria prior to the opera’s completion, perhaps it can be hypothesized that in an altogether different realm, Lulu is alive in the guise of the aria’s singer, even if the operatic representation has died. Or it can symbolize a circular, temporal structure where Lulu is forever meant to cycle through the process of seductress/performer, murderer/fugitive, outcast/victim, and back to the performer of *Der Wein*. Perhaps, in that sense, the aria is Lulu’s backstory—the one that is never clearly disclosed—which Berg fashioned for her, independent of the Wedekind narrative, thereby placing her outside of any narrative time, like the Animal Tamer, and creating a prologue to the Prologue. If one considers the cyclical proportions of the *Lulu* Prologue as occurring both before and after the opera’s narrative, why couldn’t the concert aria instill the same phenomenon if it is viewed as a prologue in its own right? An understanding of Berg’s metaphysical fantasies and projections would not preclude the possibility that he envisioned the concert aria as being some sort of temporal extension of his operatic anti-heroine. And indeed, exactly like the FMI in Act II of the opera, so too does the aria utilize a palindromic structure that instigates the retrograde motion following a central fermata that evenly bisects that piece as well, which unequivocally asserts a temporal negation and cycling back to the beginning. Therefore, if *Der Wein* is meant to repeat, and the temporal notions of past, present, future, never, and forever are blurred, could Berg have not conceived of his two sopranos being one and the same person?

## Wagnerian Temporality and Berg

Although the temporal implications were of crucial importance, Berg superimposed onto them a Schopenhauerian display of bleak pessimism that served as a catalyst for the Wagnerian metaphysics inherent in his autobiographical insertions, as seen in the reflective allusions within his operas. As he expressed in his letters to Hanna Fuchs, Berg saw himself as a Tristan-like figure. The final element required to comprehend the totality of Bergian temporality will therefore be an analysis of temporal Wagnerian metaphysics, which will bring Berg’s notions of temporality full circle after coming to terms with the Wagnerian aesthetics that informed his motivations regarding these ideals most profoundly.

In recent years, Bergian research has evolved to investigate the various aesthetic and moral influences on the composer that have previously been either overlooked or dismissed as inconsequential. Indeed, when Berg’s music experienced something of a renaissance in the 1970s, a plethora of musical analyses—seemingly bar by bar—ensued, where leading Berg scholars, such as George Perle and Douglas Jarman, among others, produced study after study that meticulously and comprehensively detailed all of the formal and structural underpinnings of every significant piece that Berg composed. After such an exhaustive endeavor, where else can



scholarship go? Even during their theoretical analyses, the aforementioned scholars always peppered their studies with allusions to Berg's biography and personality. The fact that Berg's music was deeply personal and reflective of his inner psychology has always been comprehended. Now, however, with the music having its justified time in the forefront of perception, attention must turn to the man in order to fathom the impulses that drove Berg to produce his hauntingly moving and original music. Whether explicitly or secretly, Berg was a man who needed to express all the layers of his heart and being. There were never any misgivings regarding his musical and literary heroes, but the extent to which their influence permeated his output, both consciously and subconsciously, is the stage of Bergian research at which we find ourselves today.

Standing at the forefront of Berg's childhood and adult awareness was the figure of Richard Wagner, a composer whose paramount influence on Berg has only relatively recently been scrutinized from a psycho-philosophical perspective.<sup>[145]</sup> And within the Wagnerian oeuvre, it was *Tristan und Isolde* that captured Berg's imagination most thoroughly throughout his entire life. Moreover, Santos astutely notes that "[*Tristan*] provides the necessary elements in Berg's constructions of narratives related to his personal experiences but also a mirror in which to express a sense of self-identity ... . Wagner provided a vehicle through which Berg asserted his self-knowledge and identity."<sup>[146]</sup> It is with this understanding that the following examination of Wagner's metaphysical temporality within his two great Schopenhauerian music dramas, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Parsifal*, allows a further, plausible parallel to be drawn between Berg and Wagner. It will emphasize an inherent application of temporality that Berg was very likely to have discerned within the narrative structures of his great predecessor. As Bryan Magee comments, "In his final years, he [Wagner] came to feel that Schopenhauer's philosophy and his own *Tristan* and *Parsifal* (all of which were inextricably interconnected for him) represented the ultimate in human insight—'the crowning achievement,' as he himself expressed it: and he did not mean the crowning achievement of himself and Schopenhauer alone."<sup>[147]</sup> He goes on to say how, "without Schopenhauer, the creation of *Tristan und Isolde* and *Parsifal* is unthinkable, out of the question, for essential to their substance are metaphysical insights which Wagner had indeed absorbed into his living tissue and made authentically his own but which he would have been wholly incapable of arriving at by himself."<sup>[148]</sup>

[15] Wagner's own critique on temporality was based on a pessimistic assessment, where he considers the phenomenon from the perspective of a great creative mind. He equates time and space with one's immediate surroundings as being steeped in ultimate tragedy. The confines of time and space, as a product of society at large, weaken the great mind by giving it "the look of sheer anomalies, nay, solecisms, at which the generality may jeer with a certain right, as if to please the Time and Space it serves."<sup>[149]</sup> Wagner portrays this image as an empirical weakness that requires a metaphysical transcendence of the will, thereby inciting a "spiritual life whose acts are guided by denial of the world and all its history."<sup>[150]</sup> He further posits a distinction between the two temporal realms, applying the imagery that was to be the Schopenhauerian cornerstone of *Tristan*:



For as in that phenomenon [clairvoyance, or temporal suspensions via dreams], the inward-facing consciousness attains the actual power of sight where our waking daylight consciousness feels nothing but a vague impression of the midnight background of our will's emotions, so from out this night *Tone* bursts upon the world of waking, a direct utterance of the Will. As dreams must have brought to everyone's experience, beside the world envisaged by the functions of the waking brain there dwells a second, distinct as is itself, no less a world displayed to vision; since this second world can in no case be an object lying outside us, it therefore must be brought to our cognisance by an *inward* function of the brain; and this form of the brain's perception Schopenhauer here calls the Dream-organ. Now a no less positive experience is this: besides the world that presents itself to sight, in waking as in dreams, we are conscious of the existence of a second world, perceptible only through the ear, manifesting itself through sound; literally a *sound-world* beside the *light-world*, a world of which we may say that it bears the same relation to the visible world as dreaming to waking: for it is quite as plain to us as is the other, though we must recognise it as being entirely different.<sup>[151]</sup>

The essence of temporality in *Tristan und Isolde* has been inherent within Wagnerian scholarship for a long time, but after surveying the textual distinctions of such a phenomenon in Berg's operatic libretti, it is meaningful to do the same with Wagner's libretto for *Tristan* to accurately discern his emphatic projections of this occurrence, which were undoubtedly perceptible to Berg. Act II of *Tristan* is a battle, waged between the two temporal realms of the empirical world and the metaphysical realm. The voice of Schopenhauer is most clearly heard in the reflective philosophical treatise that Wagner composed for him in this act. The imagery of night and day is the metaphor that Wagner uses to draw a distinction between the temporal realms. Each realm has its crusading advocate, and the first clash of wills ensues at the very beginning of Act II between Isolde and Brangäne. Isolde yearns for the cover of night, where she may be physically with Tristan, but where they may also be metaphysically joined. She exclaims, "Out with the light's last flickering spark ... beckon the night! Oh, now let the light be quenched! Put out its frightening glare! Let my beloved in!"<sup>[152]</sup> Brangäne replies by saying: "The torch of warning should stay there. Let it illuminate your danger."<sup>[153]</sup> Brangäne stands as the representation of light, as the rational voice of the empirical world that speaks of danger. In response, Isolde, standing as metaphysical night, describes a string of dichotomies that are meant to represent polarizations, which signify her diametric awareness of and opposition to her maid's position. She speaks of "life and death; joy and pain; hate and love,"<sup>[154]</sup> in order not just to emphasize the opportunity given to her by destiny after consuming the love potion that she believed to be a cocktail of death but to stress her belief in a notion of dualities, such as the two temporal realms, which she sees as equally divided. Brangäne does not relent, reiterating how the love potion "puts out the light of your reason ... Oh, beware: danger's awake! Just once, this night allow the torch, quench it not!"<sup>[155]</sup> Isolde ignores her and reaffirms that "it should be night."<sup>[156]</sup>

The second scene of Act II, between Tristan and Isolde, now utterly rejects the light and yields fully to the metaphysical imagery of the night. In the ensuing exchange, the lovers experience a temporal suspension and are taken out of the linear, chronological narrative of time. They have momentarily transcended the empirical rules of both time and the will. They are bound by a spirituality of absent temporality and utter such transcendent musings as, "Endless; above all earthly; O troubling light, how long before it's out? The sun has sunk, the day has fled, yet out of spite the light remains: it lights a fearful sign which it set beside my beloved's doorway, so that I may not reach her; through love's guarding care and might I here defy the day; as you the light, oh, could I extinguish; even in night's splendor of dusk, etc."<sup>[157]</sup> Berg utilizes similar temporal suspensions for *Wozzeck*, who perpetually envisions his predestined doom through metaphysical glimpses that describe fire and redness and instill the same apprehension and fear in him that the light does for Tristan and Isolde. The lovers' declarations become even more saturated with

exemplifications of temporal duality empirical desolation is described via the “day’s bright sun of worldly honor with its resplendent, empty rapture ... . The chaste night held it there, where, locked in dark, it woke, this thing I had not dreamed, just dimly had perceived, a picture that my eyes did not dare so much as gaze on, when a ray of day revealed it, and made it shine before me.”<sup>[158]</sup> Tristan is describing metaphysical revelations that the dark bestowed upon him and which the empirical light had previously withheld. Isolde confirmingly replies, “the light of day, I now wish to flee, and deep into night draw you with me, where my heart foretold me the error would end; where all feared deceit and fraud would vanish, there would I drink to you love eternal. I wished, joined into one, we might be pledged in death.”<sup>[159]</sup> This is a profoundly important narrative moment, as Isolde has described her temporal suspension, where she has predestined the eternal love in death and her own pending *Liebestod*. Magee concurs, noting how “only by hiding themselves from the rest of the world under cover of darkness can they meet as lovers at all. This leads to many exchanges about their detestation of daylight, and of the external world from which they are withdrawing, with all its false values, and at the same time their devotion to darkness and to night. In full Schopenhauerian consciousness they reject the world;”<sup>[160]</sup> “they are singing metaphysics.”<sup>[161]</sup> Eric Chafe agrees, noting how “the onset of darkness is a metaphor for the metaphysical night-death the lovers increasingly long for through the course of the love scene.”<sup>[162]</sup> Once more, we see the profound distinction between Schopenhauer’s and Wagner’s idea of metaphysical transcendence: Whereas the former believed that only death can bring a transcendence of the empirical world, the latter believed that love within death was the ultimate salvation. Chafe adds: “The merging of love and longing for death, poeticized as night, leads them to envision the metaphysical noumenon as blissful union beyond death, eternal love, but now without names or individuals. Here Wagner emphasizes the idea of transcendence of the individual will, the word ‘*einbewusst*’ conveying the merging of individual consciousness into the larger undifferentiated union.”<sup>[163]</sup> In regard to these notions, Berg aesthetically aligns himself closer to Schopenhauer than to Wagner, because he lacks Wagner’s idealism of salvation. Indeed, Berg does not grant Alwa a blissful union with Lulu at the end of that opera but instead offers the kind of oblivion that yields a transcendence from empirical suffering and not a means to a loving, metaphysical union. Tristan himself continues in this vein that Isolde established by declaring how “through the door of death ... its wondrous realm, wherein I’d wandered only in dreams, the wonderland of night ... my eyes, used to the darkness now could perceive it truly.”<sup>[164]</sup> This is the second time that mention has been made of a doorway, this time with the addition of death as the metaphorical path to the higher temporal realm through the dream of night. Both characters now fully accept that their love, through death, will put them through the doorway into the realm above space and time. Emphasis is added through the words “the holy night, where forever, solely true, love and rapture await!”<sup>[165]</sup> The scene typically continues with repeated declarations of transcending “earthly illusion” and experiencing eternal love through death. However, there is a fatalistic interjection by the observing Brangäne, who nevertheless brings awareness not to the lovers but to empirical observers that “soon the night will fade.”<sup>[166]</sup>

[16] The enraptured lovers remain in their transcendent state until the end of the scene. However, at the start of the third scene, Wagner’s stage direction, which Berg wholeheartedly adopted later himself, reads that “morning dawns,”<sup>[167]</sup> whereby the return of the light is not only announced but possesses a hint of foreboding for what is to come. The metaphysical illusion is shattered, and at the end of the scene, which closes the act, Tristan foresees his own death and beckons to Isolde to follow him into the metaphysical night realm, when he says: “Now whither Tristan travels, will you, Isolde, follow? The land that Tristan means no sunlight can illumine ... such

Tristan offers you, and first he goes before; if she will follow, kind and true, let Isold' speak right now!"<sup>[168]</sup> Moments later, he allows himself to be run through by Melot's sword. In the third act, Tristan is barely clinging to life and exclaiming how he will soon depart for the realm of night, while Isolde is still in the realm of light. He finally dies when Isolde reaches him, after which Isolde sings her *Liebested*, where she describes Tristan's existence in the metaphysical realm, with her own final words being: "In the billowy surge, in the ocean of sound, in the World Spirit's infinite All, to drown now, descending, void of thought—highest bliss!"<sup>[169]</sup> With these words, Isolde is transfigured and sinks lifeless onto Tristan, joining him in the realm of eternal night. Chafe notes how following Tristan's death, "Isolde experiences her own conversion to the metaphysical, hearing rather than seeing Tristan awaken once more."<sup>[170]</sup> He further maintains that "Isolde's *Liebested* is a poetic confirmation of Tristan's victory over the will ... ; it announces the existence of another musical *Weise* that now Isolde alone can hear—a poeticizing of Schopenhauer's metaphysics of music; and it absorbs an echo of desire into the final cadence, affirming the end of the dreams of love and existence simultaneously."<sup>[171]</sup> And further still: "the *Liebested* opens up a rift between the physical and metaphysical perspectives on existence. Isolde now enters a world that is more truly apart from that of the other characters than at any other point in the drama;"<sup>[172]</sup> "and finally, with the *Liebested*, Isolde experiences her own clairvoyant vision of Tristan, as Tristan had of her."<sup>[173]</sup> In her *Liebested*, therefore, Isolde has experienced a temporal suspension in her perception of Tristan's metaphysical transcendence. A final word on the night/day duality: apart from their metaphysical implications, they are cyclically temporal, despite being a dichotomy of opposites. Berg identified with this notion and used the same diametric phenomenon in *Wozzeck* to denote the cyclical and linear chronology of time, on which he superimposed his temporal suspensions.

*Parsifal*, conversely, offers a different temporal path of distinction between the empirical and metaphysical realms. Whereas *Tristan* was centered around transcendence via love-death, in *Parsifal* denial of the will and subsequent metaphysical transcendence occur via compassionate redemption. Physical love has become a symbol of the empirical world and is portrayed as something to be resisted in *Parsifal*. Yet the dichotomy between the two temporal realms is ever present, and the fulfillment of transcendence is desired by all the characters. Notions of compassion and redemption are inherent throughout the narrative, but the implications of the two temporal realms are most evident at the end of Act I and the start of Act II. At the end of Act I, Gurnemanz invites Parsifal to witness the Grail ceremony. The moment of their travel to the ceremony is known as the Transformation Scene of Act I. It is at this point that Gurnemanz famously utters to Parsifal, "You see, my son, time here becomes space."<sup>[174]</sup> They are now on a pathway to another realm, to which only those who have transcended the empirical will have access of entry. At the conclusion of the ceremony, Parsifal is deemed unworthy to remain and is quite literally pushed out through a door. As in *Tristan*, the metaphor of a doorway to distinguish the two temporal realms is again evident, although Parsifal is ejected from one realm and descends into another. That other realm is Klingsor's garden of earthly or empirical delights, which exists for the sole purpose to corrupt and permanently bar reentry into the metaphysical realm of the Grail. It is a perfect dualistic example of the temporal challenge that Parsifal faces in order to achieve authentic transcendence. The very first words of Act II are the ones that Klingsor utters: "The time has come."<sup>[175]</sup> The more symbolic reading of this line is that time is once more linear because it is happening now, meaning that Parsifal is now in the empirical realm and no longer in a nebulous, metaphysical realm of anti-time. In an abstract way, Parsifal is presented with another door between the temporal realms in the form of Kundry, the temptress (among other roles), who embodies sexuality, lust, and the empirical will. She succeeds in awakening his

sexuality but not in corrupting him. Had she succeeded in the latter, the door to the metaphysical would have forever been closed to him. Parsifal subsequently overcomes the challenge placed in front of him by resisting earthy temptation, and in doing so is overcome by compassion for one of the drama's greatest sufferers, Amfortas. His newfound compassion gives him the power to defeat Klingsor, and in attaining his transcendent state of being, Parsifal eventually finds his way back to the metaphysical realm of the Grail. The drama ends with him redeeming all those who have suffered in a state of temporal limbo as a result of empirical weakness.

In a summation of *Parsifal's* temporality, Mary Cicora argues that in the drama, "both time and space have disintegrated and metaphysically merged. Wagner's mythical world is new indeed. The succession of generations has yielded to a surreal simultaneity, with Titurel alive in the grave. Furthermore, though the work supposedly takes place in medieval Spain, the entire drama, encompassing both the Grail [metaphysical] Realm and beyond, exists at one further remove from the real world. Peter Wapnewski comments that whereas in Wolfram's romance *Parzival* is reintegrated into the standard time frame on Good Friday, Wagner's work takes place in a realm of timelessness, and Wagner takes Parsifal out of the usual time scheme entirely."<sup>[176]</sup>

[17] Theodor Adorno was one of the earliest commentators who spoke of Wagner and Berg in the same breath. Indeed, Adorno's prose on Wagner was largely polemical, and he sought to establish divisions between the two composers rather than emphasize their similarities. He claimed that "what distinguishes Berg from Wagner is most apparent in precisely that Bergian tone ... , a tone untouched by what from the outset characterizes Wagner's tone: self-glorification. ... Not only does Berg's music never actually affirm themes; it absolutely never affirms itself. ... For Wagner the unconscious always represented the highest joy [*Höchste Lust*], whereas Berg's music renounces itself and the person speaking through it, in recognition of its inherent vanity."<sup>[177]</sup> Nevertheless, in regard to the notion of temporality, Adorno did—over the span of several decades and monographs—isolate several defining features that he inadvertently attributed to both composers. He described Berg's creative voice as being emphatic of "the idea that all is nothing through the contrast inherent in erecting an elaborate musical structure that springs from nothingness and trickles away into nothingness."<sup>[178]</sup> He continued: "Berg possesses a special technique for taking defined thematic shapes and, in the course of developing them, calling them back to nothingness."<sup>[179]</sup> And, as stated above, Adorno described how Berg's "musical retrograde patterns are anti-temporal, they organize music as if it were an intrinsic simultaneity."<sup>[180]</sup>

Bearing all of that in mind about Berg, Adorno begins by saying about Wagner's music that "the intermittent gesture becomes the fundamental principle of composition."<sup>[181]</sup> He maintains that Wagner uses repeating sequences to exemplify his gestures, which yield a "firm temporal structure."<sup>[182]</sup> Furthermore, he says, unlike Beethoven, who develops his gestures, "Wagner's gesture is essentially immutable and atemporal. Impotently repeating itself, music abandons the struggle within the temporal framework."<sup>[183]</sup> Adorno argues that "every repetition of gestures evades the necessity to create musical time; they merely order themselves, as it were, in time and detach themselves from the temporal continuum that they seemingly constituted."<sup>[184]</sup> Adorno posits the same theory (or accusation) on Berg by describing his own repeated gestures of "musical retrograde patterns" as "anti-temporal," just as they were for Wagner. And just like he described Berg's propensity for creating music that starts from and returns to nothingness, so too does he say that "the eternity of Wagnerian music, like that of the poem of the *Ring*, is one which proclaims that nothing has happened."<sup>[185]</sup> Moreover, as if speaking unequivocally of Bergian temporality, Adorno says of Wagner's music that it "acts as if time had no end, but its

effect is merely to negate the hours it fills by leading them back to their starting-point.”<sup>[186]</sup> Out of context, one could easily surmise that Adorno was summarizing the essence of *Wozzeck* here. Adorno also describes the Wagnerian sound as “negating the flow of time;”<sup>[187]</sup> “canceling time;”<sup>[188]</sup> and making “time seem transfixed in space.”<sup>[189]</sup> Clearly, these are all signifiers that are undeniably associated with Bergian temporality as well. Lastly, Adorno claims that for Wagner, “in no passage does the sound go beyond itself temporally; instead, it is dissipated in space. In Wagner, the fundamental metaphysical category was renunciation, the denial of the will to life.”<sup>[190]</sup> The dissipation into space can be interpreted as the same Bergian phenomenon of ending in nothingness.

Between the two operas of Berg and the two operas of Wagner, we have seen characters grapple with elements of narrative temporality, albeit to vastly different ends. Berg projected the duality of the empirical and metaphysical as psychological tenets of which his characters were consciously or unconsciously aware in metaphoric terms. For Wagner, temporality between the realms was more emphatic of Schopenhauer, where it was desirable to transcend one realm in favor of another. The primary difference between the two composers is that Berg was interested in temporal repetition, symmetry of patterns, with no hope of redemption, whereas Wagner wanted to prove that hope does exist and that suffering can be alleviated. Interestingly, however, Chafe uncovered an instance in Wagner’s oeuvre where cyclical temporality was a central theme. He notes how the song “Stehe still,” from the *Wesendonck Lieder*, incorporated a Schopenhauerian depiction in the form of the “‘wheel of time,’ whose endless revolving symbolizes the cyclic nature of existence and desire. Schopenhauer, for whom the circle was the universal symbol of nature, referred to the ‘wheel of Ixion’ as a symbol of the endless process of willing, the subject of ‘Stehe still.’ The title of ‘Stehe still’ is a cry for the wheel to cease, bringing an end to existence itself.”<sup>[191]</sup> The similarity of this imagery to the opening scene of *Wozzeck*, where the Captain describes a mill-wheel as a metaphor for his fear of time and circular structures, is undeniable. The extent of Berg’s familiarity with this Wagnerian song is uncertain, but knowing his preoccupation with Wagner, it is certainly not outside the realm of possibilities that he made use of similar symbolism in his opera. Wagner did, however, use a strikingly similar metaphor even earlier—and with temporal implications more akin to Berg’s repetitive symbolism—in his treatise *The Art-Work of the Future*, noting how the “restless mill-wheel of the Wish, the ever craving, ever unstilled Wish which—thrusting off its only possible assuagement, in the *world of sense*—must only wish *itself* eternally, eternally consume *itself*.”<sup>[192]</sup> This congruence is demonstrated again with another song from the *Wesendonck Lieder*, “Schmerzen,” which “takes up another Schopenhauer-derived image: that of the analogy between the setting sun and death, the rising sun and rebirth.”<sup>[193]</sup> Once more, we see a fundamental element of *Wozzeck*—the interplay between the setting sun and rising moon—sharing symbolic kinship with a Wagnerian composition. Chafe also reiterates how the *Wesendonck Lieder* and *Tristan* share structural and harmonic underpinnings, thereby further strengthening the plausibility of Berg’s awareness of these details. All of this contributes to the notion that despite substantial narrative and figurative differences between the four operas, temporality as a philosophical concept was truly paramount to both Wagner and Berg and acted as the allegorical crux of these operas.





**Figure 4: Aleksander**

**Samuel: “Berg manipulating temporality  
in the metaphysical realm”**

## Conclusion

[18] Temporality, as a narrative device, is a central element in Berg’s operas, both textually and musically. The systematic form of creating circular structures with palindromes via large-scale retrogrades is meant to turn narrative time back onto itself as an expression of fatalistic negation. This conceptualization held metaphysical implications for Berg that coalesced with his notions of time and space. In his operas, Berg would appropriate the libretti to textually traverse the two temporal realms of the empirical world and the metaphysical plane in order to obfuscate the perceptions of reality for his characters and ultimately put them on paths of predetermined doom through a perpetual repetition of fate, as in the case of *Wozzeck*. He would do this at his own discretion, superseding the authority of the playwrights whose texts he chose to set to music, in order to achieve his desired philosophical and autobiographical outcomes, which were his primary concerns. Indeed, Berg inserted himself into his operas as the characters *Wozzeck*



and Alwa, in *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*, respectively. As becomes evident from his letters to Hanna Fuchs, Berg was a metaphysical idealist who sought to create spiritual realities for himself that were empirically impossible for him. Therefore, he projected himself onto his operatic doppelgänger in such a way as to steer his temporal idealism in ways that he felt he could relate to most profoundly. Tragically, though, both of his projections met their doom, without having experienced the fruits of love that Berg himself so desperately wished to taste but could not. Perhaps his reconciliation with this fact had prompted him to deny Alwa the reciprocation of love that Dr. Schön's son had desired from Lulu. Berg's fatalism could have subconsciously anticipated his own doomed love at the time of his untimely death, for as he died in reality in the final stages of his composition of *Lulu*, so too did Alwa die at the end of the opera. Berg and Alwa would both, therefore, become the victims of a love that could never metaphysically transcend their empirical deaths, because Lulu/Hanna are the anti-Isolde to their tragic Tristans, yielding to a death that is only pure, a total oblivion, and nothing else. In a poetic sense, then, Berg himself was the final victim of Lulu, as he could not break free from the pull of her damning influence either.

It can be theorized that perhaps Berg could not conceive of a time where he would not be working on *Lulu*, because composing it perpetuated the metaphysical fantasy of his love for Hanna, despite his essentially killing himself off in his own opera. The linear, temporal chronology would end when he finished the composition, but the illusion would last as long as he remained engaged with his characters. In a letter to Anton Webern, written on May 6, 1934—almost 20 months before his death—Berg announced that he had finished composing the opera in short score: “The fact that I have brought the composition of *Lulu* to an end has not made me so absolutely happy as one might suppose. ... Now I also have to ‘overhaul’ ... the whole composition from the beginning again. The work has stretched out over years and one still hasn’t a *complete* picture of the way the music unfolds. Therefore, I’m now forced to look back, in the course of which there will be a bit of retouching. All this will still require two or three weeks.”<sup>[194]</sup> So if Berg had finished the composition some 20 months before his death, and the orchestration would have taken him a few weeks, why then was Act III left incomplete in full score at the time of his death? Berg's friend and fellow Viennese composer Ernst Krenek mentioned that “during the fifties, in Vienna, some of Alban's friends from the old Schoenberg gang maintained that he did not finish the third act because he had lost interest in his project.”<sup>[195]</sup> Krenek did not agree with this assessment, believing instead that Berg had “fallen in love with Lulu (having to this day not the vaguest profile of the personality of Hanna Fuchs we cannot even guess to what extent Berg may have identified the real person with the fictitious super-woman) and, through his operatic stand-in, Alwa, the only man who really loved Lulu, wrote for her music of overwhelming sensuous beauty and intoxicating sweetness.”<sup>[196]</sup> It can therefore be surmised—since Krenek was aware both of Berg's love for Hanna/Lulu and that Berg projected himself through Alwa—that the composer certainly did not leave the final act unorchestrated due to boredom. It stands to reason, then, that Berg possibly did not finish it because he did not want to. Whether his desire to extend the compositional process was precipitated by his metaphysical idealizations or some other reason remains to be seen. But it is more likely that he simply underestimated the time he would need to fully finish the opera and was also burdened by other factors.<sup>[197]</sup>

Unlike the large-scale centralized retrograde in *Lulu*, triggered at the FMI, the retrogrades of *Wozzeck* occur at the level of the individual scenes, where Berg utilized mirror images, such as the Captain's pivotal word “*langsam*,” to both open and close the opening scene. As evidenced from their dialogues, the Captain, Wozzeck, and the Doctor all express very explicit preoccupations with temporality, as the Captain fears it, Wozzeck sees damning and destructive

implications of his future, and the Doctor obsesses with notions of his own immortality. Nevertheless, despite the overt narrative assertions of temporality within the individual scenes, Berg does instigate a large-scale palindrome in *Wozzeck*, using the final D minor interlude as an implied overture to signify the temporal repetition of the opera. *Wozzeck* differs from *Lulu* in this regard, as *Wozzeck* is meant to repeat, whereas there is a strong presupposition that *Lulu* is meant to overlap back onto itself to display total and unequivocal negation rather than repetition. Once more, Berg had deliberately appropriated the texts of the plays on which he based his opera libretti for the precise reason of accommodating the temporal implications of both works.

[19] As Seymour Chatman states, "Time is a matter of narrative, of story and discourse; tense, of the grammars of languages. Points and periods of time are *in* the story, and are expressed *by* the discourse."<sup>[198]</sup> In the context of *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*, this statement is only half true. There clearly was narrative time in both operas, but the question remains: From where did the discourse originate, from the empirical world within the operas or from the metaphysical realm that Berg manipulated with his palindromes, retrogrades, and temporal suspensions and predestinations? The answer is both. Through a literary negation of time, Berg demonstrated his architectural command over his characters' fate and blurred narrative reality to such an extent that the temporality of his operas became an existential hodgepodge where both he and his characters resided as mirror forms of one another.

In regard to his relation with Wagner, we have seen the extent to which Berg's self-stylization as a Tristan-like figure informed his personal identity. This Wagnerian identity that Berg cultivated for himself and projected in his operas in the form of his very explicit doppelgangers also reflected the most perennial and symbolic detail of his entire compositional career: the simultaneous duality of looking backwards and forwards. In considering this notion in the context of his use of temporal metaphysics, the duality can be reflected in the Wagnerian aesthetic, which represents the past, juxtaposed with Stephen Kern's implication of a modernized, technological temporality that represents the future. This is further evident from the temporal designs that Adorno seemingly inadvertently attributes to both Berg and Wagner. Berg accepted and assimilated the opposing duality into his operas, but he was again personally aligned with the Wagnerian ethos and the Schopenhauerian derivations, which Berg particularly absorbed to subconsciously shield himself from accepting the idealistic notions of salvation that Wagner had. If *Tristan* and *Parsifal* could not have been created without Wagner's knowledge of Schopenhauer, so too can it be surmised that *Wozzeck* and *Lulu* could not have been metaphysically conceived without the Wagnerian aesthetics that stemmed from Schopenhauer. Metaphysical temporality as a narrative device in both composers' libretti can therefore be seen as a fundamental tenet that is attained from the same philosophy, which unequivocally binds these two composers together over time.

## References

1. Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880–1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 33. ↑
2. Ibid., 34. ↑
3. Ibid., 33. ↑

4. Ibid., 29. [↑](#)
5. Ibid., 30. [↑](#)
6. A discussion of the original plays is not applicable to my argument, because the concept of metaphysical temporality was contrived by Berg for his operas and was not an explicit dramaturgical intention of the plays. There is ample literature that juxtaposes Berg's libretti with the original plays. For such a discussion of *Wozzeck*, see: Jean Duvignaud, "Büchner, Berg: Une continuité" in *Berg "Wozzeck,"* L'avant-scène opéra no. 215 (Paris: Premières Loges, 2003), 6–9; Erich Fornberg, "*Wozzeck*" von Alban Berg (Berlin-Lichterfelde: Robert Lienau, 1963); Gernot Gruber, "Natur, Tod und Unendlichkeit in *Woyzeck* und *Wozzeck*," in *50 Jahre "Wozzeck" von Alban Berg: Vorgeschichte und Auswirkungen in der Opernästhetik*, ed. Otto Kolleritsch (Graz: Universal Edition für Institut für Wertungsforschung, 1978), 68–77; Arthur Holmberg, "Core of Loneliness" *Opera News* 44, no. 15 (1980): 20–23; Douglas Jarman, *Alban Berg: "Wozzeck,"* Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Jürgen Kühnel, "'Von der offenen zur geschlossenen Form': Georg Büchners *Woyzeck*-Fragmente, ihre frühen Editionen und das Libretto zu Alban Bergs Oper *Georg Büchners Wozzeck*; Mit einem Exkurs zu Manfred Gurlitts *Wozzeck*-Libretto" in *Alban Bergs "Wozzeck" und die zwanziger Jahre: Vorträge und Materialien des Salzburger Symposions 1997*, ed. Peter Csobádi et al. (Anif/Salzburg: Mueller-Speiser, 1999), 51–108; Andreas Meier, "Büchner-Lektüren: Alban Bergs *Wozzeck* im Kontext der Büchner-Rezeption der zwanziger Jahre," in Csobádi, *Alban Bergs "Wozzeck,"* 181–98; George Perle, *The Operas of Alban Berg*, vol. 1, *Wozzeck* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980); George Perle, "*Woyzeck* and *Wozzeck*" *Musical Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (April 1967): 206–19; Henry J. Schmidt, "Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* (1921)" in *Georg Büchner: The Complete Collected Works*, ed. and trans. Henry J. Schmidt (New York: Avon Books, 1977), 388–92; Jack M. Stein, "From *Woyzeck* to *Wozzeck*: Alban Berg's Adaptation of Büchner," *Germanic Review* 47 (1972): 168–80. For such a discussion of *Lulu*, see: Rosemary Hilmar, "Die Bedeutung der Textvorlagen für die Komposition der Oper *Lulu* von Alban Berg," in *Festschrift Othmar Wessely zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Manfred Angerer et al. (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1982), 265–93; Theo Hirsbrunner, "Bergs *Lulu*: Damentext und Opernlibretto; Die Bearbeitung von Frank Wedekinds *Erdegeist* und *Die Büchse der Pandora* durch Alban Berg," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, March 24, 1974, 53; Dietmar Holland, "'... über die ließe sich freilich eine interessante Oper schreiben...': Wedekinds *Lulu* auf der Opernbühne" in *Alban Berg "Lulu": Texte, Materialien, Kommentare*, ed. Attila Csampai and Dietmar Holland (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1985), 9–29; Arthur Holmberg, "Opening Pandora's Box," *Opera News* 45, no. 8 (1980): 14–22; Douglas Jarman, *Alban Berg: "Lulu,"* Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Kordula Knaus, *Gezähmte Lulu: Alban Bergs Wedekind-Vertonung im Spannungsfeld von literarischer Ambition, Opernkonvention und "absoluter Musik"* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 2004); Kordula Knaus, "Die andere *Lulu*: Alban Bergs Oper nach Frank Wedekinds Dramen *Erdegeist* und *Die Büchse der Pandora*" (PhD diss., Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz, 2003); Kordula Knaus, "Ein Skandalstück wird zur Oper: von Wedekinds zu Bergs *Lulu*" in *Wedekinds Welt: Theater-Eros-Provokation*, ed. Manfred Mittermayer and Silvia Bengesser (Leipzig: Henschel, 2014), 150–57; Christian Merlin, "Frank Wedekind à l'opéra: De 'La Boîte de Pandore' à 'Lulu' de Berg" in *Berg "Lulu,"* L'avant-scène opéra no. 181–82 (Paris: Premières Loges, 1998), 172–80; Karl Neumann, "Wedekind's and Berg's *Lulu*," *Music Review* 35 (1974): 47–57; Paolo Petazzi, "La sonnambula dell'amore: Profilo di 'Lulu' di Berg," in *Alban Berg*, ed. Claudio Del Monte and Vincenzo Raffaele Segreto (Parma: Grafiche STEP Editrice, 1989), 121–48; Jack M. Stein, "*Lulu*: Alban Berg's Adaptation of Wedekind," *Comparative Literature* 26 (1974), 220–41; George Perle, *The Operas of Alban Berg*, vol. 2, *Lulu* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985). [↑](#)
7. The use of palindromes were of vital importance to virtually all of Berg's works, not just his operas. The most relevant discussions of this topic, as it concerns palindromes in context of Berg's complete output, can be found in Dave Headlam, *The Music of Alban Berg* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), and Douglas Jarman, *The Music of Alban Berg* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). [↑](#)
8. Robert P. Morgan, "The Eternal Return: Retrograde and Circular Form in Berg," in *Alban Berg: Historical and Analytical Perspectives*, ed. David Gable and Robert P. Morgan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991),

111. ↑

9. Ibid., 112. ↑

10. Ibid., 123. ↑

11. Headlam, *Music of Berg*, 6. ↑

12. Morgan, "The Eternal Return," 138. ↑

13. Ibid., 146. ↑

14. Constantin Floros, *Alban Berg: Music as Autobiography*, trans. Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014), 106. ↑

15. Juliane Brand, Christopher Hailey, and Donald Harris, ed. and trans., *The Berg-Schoenberg Correspondence: Selected Letters* (London: Macmillan Press, 1987), 136. ↑

16. John Covach, "Balzacian Mysticism, Palindromic Design, and Heavenly Time in Berg's Music," in *Encrypted Messages in Alban Berg's Music*, ed. Siglind Bruhn (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 14. ↑

17. Ibid., 15. ↑

18. Ibid., 16. ↑

19. Ibid., 24. ↑

20. Theodor W. Adorno, *Alban Berg: Master of the Smallest Link*, trans. Juliane Brand and Christopher Hailey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 14. ↑

21. Douglas Jarman, "'Remembrance of things that are to come': Some Reflections on Berg's Palindromes," in *Alban Berg and His World*, ed. Christopher Hailey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 207. ↑

22. Ibid., 216. ↑

23. Jarman, *The Music of Alban Berg*, 238. ↑

24. Ibid., 239. ↑

25. Ibid. ↑

26. Adorno, *Master of the Smallest Link*, 68. ↑

27. Ibid., 124. ↑

28. Douglas Jarman, *Alban Berg: "Wozzeck,"* Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 12. ↑

29. Alban Berg, *Wozzeck: Opera in 3 Acts (15 Scenes), Opus 7, after Georg Büchner, English/German Libretto*, trans. Eric Albert Blackall and Vida Harford (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1952), 1. Original wording: "Was will Er denn mit der ungeheuren Zeit all' anfangen?" ↑

30. Ibid. Original wording: "Nun ist es aber wieder nicht ewig, sondern ein Augenblick ... . [E]s schaudert mich, wenn ich denke, dass sich die Welt in einem Tag herumdreht: drum kann ich auch kein Mühlrad mehr sehn, oder ich werde melancholisch!" ↑

31. Ibid., 2. Original wording: "langsam, hübsch langsam!" ↑

32. Ibid., 3. Original wording: "bleibt stehen;" "starrt in die Gegend." ↑

33. Ibid. Original wording: "Ein Feuer! Das fährt von der Erde in den Himmel." ↑

34. Ibid. Original wording: "die (wie tiefste Dunkelheit wirkende) Dämmerung folgt, an die sich das Auge allmählich gewöhnt." ↑

35. Ibid. Original wording: "Still, alles still, als wäre die Welt tot." ↑
36. Ibid., 6. Original wording: "wenn die Natur aus ist, wenn die Welt so finster wird, dass man mit den Händen an ihr herumtappen muss ... wenn was is und doch nicht is! ... Wenn, Alles dunkel is, und ... nur noch ein roter Schein im Westen, wie von einer Esse: an was soll man sich da halten?" ↑
37. Ibid. Original wording: "Die Schwämme! Haben Sie schon die Ringe von den Schwämmen am Boden gesehen? Linienkreise – Figuren – Wer das lesen könnte!" ↑
38. Ibid., 9–10. Original wording: "unsterblichsten Experimente!" ↑
39. Ibid., 11. Original wording: "die Erd' ist Manchem höllenheiss ... die Hölle ist kalt dagegen." ↑
40. Ibid. Original wording: "Dann wüsste man, woran man ist!" ↑
41. Ibid., 13. Original wording: "sieht ihr starr nach." ↑
42. Ibid. Original wording: "Der Mensch ist ein Abgrund, es schwindelt Einem, wenn man hinunterschaut ... mich schwindelt ... ." ↑
43. Ibid. Original wording: "meine unsterbliche Seele, stinket nach Branntwein! Sie stinket, und ich weiss nicht, warum? Warum ist die Welt so traurig?" ↑
44. Ibid. Original wording: "Die ganze Welt ist rosenrot! Branntwein, das ist mein Leben!" ↑
45. Ibid., 14. Original wording: "Warum löscht Gott die Sonne nicht aus? ... Weib! Weib! ... Das Weib ist heiss! ist heiss! heiss!" ↑
46. Ibid. Original wording: "Immer zu! Immer zu!" ↑
47. Ibid. Original wording: "Ich meint', es müsst später sein! ... Die Zeit wird Einem lang bei der Kurzweil." ↑
48. Ibid., 15. Original wording: "Jedoch, wenn ein Wanderer, der gelehnt steht an dem Strom der Zeit, oder aber sich die göttliche Weisheit vergegenwärtigt und fraget: Warum ist der Mensch? ... aber alles Irdische ist eitel." ↑
49. Ibid. Original wording: "Und meine Seele stinkt nach Branntwein." ↑
50. Ibid. Original wording: "Lustig, lustig ... aber es riecht ... Ich riech, ich riech Blut!" ↑
51. Ibid., 16. Original wording: "Blut? – Blut, Blut! ... Mir wird rot vor den Augen. Mir ist, als wälzten sie sich alle übereinander ... ." ↑
52. Ibid. Original wording: "Und dazwischen blitzt es immer vor den Augen wie ein Messer, wie ein breites Messer!" ↑
53. Ibid., 17. Original wording: "'s ist still hier! Und so dunkel." ↑
54. Ibid., 18. ↑
55. Ibid. Original wording: "Du bist so heiss ... Wart nur, wirst auch kalt werden!" ↑
56. Ibid., 19. ↑
57. Ibid. Original wording: "Still! – Alles still und tot." ↑
58. Ibid., 20. Original wording: "Will denn die ganze Welt es ausplaudern?!" ↑
59. Ibid. ↑
60. Narratologist Seymour Chatman summarized the notion of literary theorist Gerard Genette, who stated that "repetitive anachronies ... repeat what has been stated before—the narrative going back, sometimes explicitly, over its own tracks"—though with a different slant on the original events." Quoted in: Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 65. This is precisely what Berg intended for his narrative repetition, albeit with a



subsequently different slant. [↑](#)

61. Jarman, "Remembrance of things," 217. [↑](#)
62. Misha Donat, "Mathematical Mysticism," *The Listener*, April 2, 1970, 458. [↑](#)
63. Alban Berg, "Lecture on *Wozzeck*: The 'Atonal Opera,'" in *Pro Mundo—Pro Domo: The Writings of Alban Berg*, ed. Bryan R. Simms (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 232. [↑](#)
64. *Ibid.*, 235. [↑](#)
65. *Ibid.*, 264. [↑](#)
66. *Ibid.*, 217. [↑](#)
67. Constantin Floros, *Alban Berg and Hanna Fuchs: The Story of a Love in Letters*, trans. Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 18. [↑](#)
68. *Ibid.*, 19. [↑](#)
69. *Ibid.*, 21. [↑](#)
70. *Ibid.*, 23. [↑](#)
71. *Ibid.*, 25. [↑](#)
72. *Ibid.*, 26–27. [↑](#)
73. *Ibid.*, 47. [↑](#)
74. *Ibid.*, 56. [↑](#)
75. *Ibid.*, 58–59. [↑](#)
76. *Ibid.*, 61. [↑](#)
77. Silvio J. dos Santos, *Narratives of Identity in Alban Berg's "Lulu"* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2014), 31–32. [↑](#)
78. Douglas Jarman, *Alban Berg: "Lulu,"* Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 33. [↑](#)
79. George Perle, *The Operas of Alban Berg*, vol. 2, *Lulu* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 48–49. [↑](#)
80. Santos, *Narratives of Identity*, 79. [↑](#)
81. Carl Dahlhaus, *Vom Musikdrama zur Literaturoper: Aufsätze zur neueren Operngeschichte* (Munich: Piper, 1989), 181. Unless otherwise stated, all foreign translations herein are made by me. [↑](#)
82. *Ibid.*, 184. [↑](#)
83. Santos, *Narratives of Identity*, 176. [↑](#)
84. August 9, 1920, in Brand, Hailey, and Harris, *The Berg-Schoenberg Correspondence*, 405. [↑](#)
85. Michel Fano, "Quatre notes sur le 'temps' dans *Wozzeck*," in *Berg "Wozzeck," L'avant-scène opéra* no. 215 (Paris: Premières Loges, 2003), 92. [↑](#)
86. *Ibid.* [↑](#)
87. Donat, "Mathematical Mysticism," 3. [↑](#)
88. Alban Berg, *Lulu: Opera in 3 Acts (7 Scenes), after "Erdgeist" and "Büchse der Pandora" by Frank Wedekind, English/German Libretto*, transl. Arthur Jacobs (n.p.: Universal Edition, 1978), 3. Original wording: "Sie ward geschaffen, Unheil anzustiften, Zu locken, zu verführen, zu vergiften. Und zu morden,

ohne daß es einer spürt." ↑

89. Ibid. Original wording: "Mein süßes Tier, sei ja nur nicht geziert!" ↑
90. Ibid., 19. Original wording: "Ich heiße seit Menschengedenken nicht mehr Lulu." "Ein Tier." ↑
91. Ibid., 61. This literal translation has at times been present in the verbatim, analogous text of the Animal Trainer, confirming the Prologue reference. Original wording: "Ich habe nie in der Welt etwas anderes scheinen wollen, als wofür man mich genommen hat." ↑
92. Perle, *Lulu*, 59. ↑
93. Ibid., 146. ↑
94. Donat, "Mathematical Mysticism," 2. ↑
95. Berg, *Lulu libretto*, 19. Original wording: "Auf alle himmlischen Freuden Verzicht leisten, als meine Lulu hienieden in Entbehrung zurücklassen." ↑
96. Ibid., 31. Original wording: "Unwillkürlich ihr Bild mit den Blicken streifend." ↑
97. Ibid., 35. Original wording: "Sie haben ja doch die Musik dazu komponiert. Es gehen schon einige da unten ganz ernstlich mit sich zu Rate. Ich fühle das, ohne daß ich hinsehe." ↑
98. Ibid. Original wording: "Über die ließe sich freilich eine interessante Oper schreiben. (vor dem Plakat stehend) Das tobt wie in der Menagerie, wenn das Futter vor dem Käfig erscheint." ↑
99. Ibid. Original wording: "Mit Hinweis auf ihr Bild." ↑
100. Ibid., 37. Original wording: "In Lulus Anblick versunken, wie vor einem Bild." ↑
101. Ibid., 43. Original wording: "Mein Todesurteil; Jetzt—kommt—die Hinrichtung." ↑
102. Ibid. Original wording: "Versuchen Sie nicht, mich zu retten!" ↑
103. Ibid., 55. Original wording: "Ich hab' auch nur Fleisch und Blut. Versprichst du mir das für immer?" ↑
104. Ibid., 57. Original wording: "Eine Seele, die sich im Jenseits den Schlaf aus den Augen reibt." ↑
105. Ibid., 61. Original wording: "Laß sie nicht entkommen: du bist der Nächste ... ." ↑
106. Ibid., 65. Original wording: "Zu der nun folgenden Verwandlungsmusik werden in einem stummen Film die Schicksale Lulus in den nächsten Jahren andeutungsweise gezeigt, wobei das filmische Geschehen, entsprechend dem symmetrischen Verlauf der Musik auch quasi symmetrisch (also vorwärtsgehend und rückläufig) zu verteilen ist." ↑
107. Perle, *Lulu*, 70-71. ↑
108. Adorno, *Master of the Smallest Link*, 124. ↑
109. Berg, *Lulu libretto*, 65. Original wording: "Schatten," "Spiegelbild." ↑
110. Ibid., 69. Original wording: "Sie haben eine Schauderoper geschrieben, in der die Waden meiner Braut die Hauptfiguren sind, und das kein Hoftheater zur Aufführung bringt." ↑
111. Ibid., 73. Original wording: "Das erinnert an vergangene Zeiten. Wo ist denn mein Bild?" ↑
112. Ibid. Original wording: "Du hast es nicht angesehen'n, während ich fort war?" ↑
113. Perle, *Lulu*, 84. ↑
114. Berg, *Lulu libretto*, 75. Original wording: "Mit deinem Bild kannst du es immer noch aufnehmen." ↑
115. Ibid. Original wording: "Wenn deine beiden großen Kinderaugen nicht wären, müßte ich dich für die abgefeimteste Dirne halten, die je einen Mann ins Verderben gestürzt." "... uns sehen, so oft wir wollen." ↑

116. Ibid., 77. Original wording: "... Ist das noch der Diwan, – auf dem sich – dein Vater – verblutet hat? –" ↑
117. Ibid., 103. Original wording: "Mein Bild! Mir aus den Augen! Werft es zum Fenster hinaus!" ↑
118. Ibid., 105. Original wording: "Plötzlich neu belebt." "Diesem Bild gegenüber gewinn' ich meine Selbstachtung wieder. Es macht mir mein Verhängnis begreiflich." "Etwas elegisch." ↑
119. Santos, *Narratives of Identity*, 74. ↑
120. Berg, *Lulu libretto*, 105. Original wording: "Wem sie heute unter die Hände gerät, der macht sich keinen Begriff mehr von unserer Jugendzeit." ↑
121. Ibid., 107. Original wording: "Du gehst nicht mehr hinunter, so wahr ich lebe." "Lulu, ich gehe mit, wohin du auch gehst." ↑
122. Ibid., 109. Original wording: "Schöne Träume kommen! Träumt von dir!" ↑
123. Ibid. Original wording: "Er will seine Ruhe haben." ↑
124. Ibid. Original wording: "Wie dunkel es hier ist." "Es wird noch viel dunkler." ↑
125. Ibid. Original wording: "Wenn sie mich heut in meinem Blut liegen sieht, weint sie mir keine Träne nach." ↑
126. Ibid., 111. Original wording: "Erbarm dich mein! Erbarm dich mein! (bleibt in dieser Haltung)." ↑
127. Perle, *Lulu*, 219. ↑
128. Santos, *Narratives of Identity*, 177. ↑
129. Berg, *Lulu libretto*, 111. Original wording: "Sie ist in dich verliebt. Armes Tier!" "Wie einem Hund das Haar streichelnd." ↑
130. Ibid., 113. Original wording: "Wir brauchen kein Licht, der Mond scheint." ↑
131. Ibid. Original wording: "Lassen Sie mich nicht länger betteln." "Mir soll's recht sein." ↑
132. Ibid. Original wording: "Allein, wie im Traum." ↑
133. Ibid. Original wording: "Lulu! Mein Engel! Laß dich noch einmal sehn! Ich bin dir nah! Bleibe dir nah, in Ewigkeit!" ↑
134. Santos, *Narratives of Identity*, 181. ↑
135. Ibid., 182. ↑
136. Perle, *Lulu*, 84. ↑
137. Brand, Hailey, and Harris, *The Berg-Schoenberg Correspondence*, 406. ↑
138. Jarman, *The Music of Alban Berg*, 237. ↑
139. Adorno, *Master of the Smallest Link*, 114. ↑
140. Perle, *Lulu*, 29. ↑
141. Headlam, *Music of Berg*, 212. ↑
142. Ibid., 215. ↑
143. Chandos audio recording, "Alban Berg Orchestral Works," <https://www.chandos.net/chanimages/Booklets/CHSA5074.pdf> (accessed 7 September 2018). ↑
144. Floros, *Alban Berg and Hanna Fuchs*, 56. ↑
145. Cf. Vanja Ljubibratić, "Wagnerian Aesthetics as Expressionist Foundations on Alban Berg's Music and the Russian Silver Age," *Danish Yearbook of Musicology* 42, no. 1 (2018): 24–53. ↑

146. Santos, *Narratives of Identity*, 3–4. [↑](#)
147. Bryan Magee, *The Tristan Chord: Wagner and Philosophy* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000), 140. [↑](#)
148. Ibid., 193. [↑](#)
149. Richard Wagner, *Religion and Art*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 86. [↑](#)
150. Ibid. [↑](#)
151. Richard Wagner, *Actors and Singers*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 68. [↑](#)
152. Richard Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde: Opera in Three Acts*, trans. by Stewart Robb, G. Schirmer's Collection of Opera Librettos (New York: G. Schirmer, 1965), 13. [↑](#)
153. Ibid. [↑](#)
154. Ibid. [↑](#)
155. Ibid. [↑](#)
156. Ibid. [↑](#)
157. Ibid., 14–15. [↑](#)
158. Ibid., 16. [↑](#)
159. Ibid. [↑](#)
160. Magee, *The Tristan Chord*, 216. [↑](#)
161. Ibid., 219. [↑](#)
162. Eric Chafe, *The Tragic and the Ecstatic: The Musical Revolution of Wagner's "Tristan und Isolde"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 179. [↑](#)
163. Ibid., 11. [↑](#)
164. Wagner, *Tristan* libretto, 16. [↑](#)
165. Ibid., 17. [↑](#)
166. Ibid., 18. [↑](#)
167. Ibid., 20. [↑](#)
168. Ibid., 22. [↑](#)
169. Ibid., 31. [↑](#)
170. Chafe, *The Tragic and the Ecstatic*, 7. [↑](#)
171. Ibid., 12. [↑](#)
172. Ibid., 273. [↑](#)
173. Ibid., 274. [↑](#)
174. Richard Wagner, *Parsifal: Music Drama in Three Acts*, trans. Stewart Robb, G. Schirmer's Collection of Opera Librettos (New York: G. Schirmer, 1962), 7. [↑](#)
175. Ibid., 10. [↑](#)
176. Mary A. Cicora, "Medievalism and Metaphysics: The Literary Background of *Parsifal*," in *A Companion to Wagner's "Parsifal"*, ed. William Kinderman and Katherine R. Syer (Rochester, NY: Camden House,

2005), 40. [↑](#)

177. Adorno, *Master of the Smallest Link*, 5. [↑](#)

178. *Ibid.*, 2. [↑](#)

179. *Ibid.*, 3. [↑](#)

180. *Ibid.*, 14. [↑](#)

181. Theodor Adorno, *In Search of Wagner*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 2005), 26. [↑](#)

182. *Ibid.* [↑](#)

183. *Ibid.*, 26–27. [↑](#)

184. *Ibid.*, 27. [↑](#)

185. *Ibid.*, 30. [↑](#)

186. *Ibid.*, 32. [↑](#)

187. *Ibid.* [↑](#)

188. *Ibid.*, 50. [↑](#)

189. *Ibid.*, 52. [↑](#)

190. Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 140. [↑](#)

191. Chafe, *The Tragic and the Ecstatic*, 128. [↑](#)

192. Richard Wagner, *The Art-Work of the Future and Other Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 144–45. [↑](#)

193. Chafe, 313. [↑](#)

194. Perle, *Lulu*, 240. [↑](#)

195. Ernst Krenek, “Marginal Remarks to *Lulu*,” in *Alban Berg Symposion Wien 1980: Tagungsbericht*, ed. Rudolf Klein, *Alban Berg Studien*, vol. 2 (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1981), 10. [↑](#)

196. *Ibid.*, 10–11. [↑](#)

197. In 1935, Berg’s final year of life, he was experiencing significant financial loss, as his music had been effectively banned in Germany—where he had enjoyed his greatest successes—when the National Socialists came to power. He also put the orchestration of *Lulu* aside to devote several months of time to compose his commissioned violin concerto, which brought temporary financial relief. His health had also taken a turn for the worse that summer, when an insect sting at the base of his spine ultimately turned septic and killed him in December of that year. [↑](#)

198. Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 81. [↑](#)