ABSTRACT

AN UNINVITED PARTY:
POWER, GAZE, AND WEDEKIND’S LULU

by ChuYoung Chon

This thesis consists of three sections, each looking at various receptions of Frank Wedekind’s Lulu plays. By summarizing a brief reception history of the plays, contradictory readings of the figure Lulu will be presented. I will argue that being a subject in the modern time, Lulu can be seen as a tragic victim who is cast into a network of power and gaze. What becomes evident is that the figure Lulu embodies a character much in advance of the era. In this, she is a postmodern phenomenon that has contradictory natures to the modern ideas of totality, rationality, centrality, and ‘the one.’ Though caught as an object in the “Panopticon,” she announces the destiny of modernity by showing its result of excessive exercise of power, a persisting projection in a disciplined society.

Keywords: Frank Wedekind, Femme Fatale, Panopticism, Power, Gaze, Postmodernity.
AN UNINVITED PARTY:

POWER, GAZE, AND WEDEKIND’S LULU

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ChuYoung Chon

Miami University

Oxford, Ohio

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Advisor_______________________

William J. Doan

Reader_______________________

Howard A. Blanning

Reader_______________________

Jimmy A. Bickerstaff
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Dedication

To my provider and shepherd, God.

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Introduction

Literature on the Lulu Plays

Wedekind has long been hailed as a liberator of sexual repression, through the depiction of various female characters in his plays. Among his various plays, the Lulu plays are inarguably the leading dramas in the discussion of such a theme. While scholars showed awe and praise for Wedekind’s stubborn attempts and pursuits in continuously writing satirical plays, they nonetheless appeared baffled by the incomprehensible characteristics of the female protagonist, Lulu. Also the depiction of sexual themes was too radical for his era, making the playwright and his plays less approachable to the general audience. The earlier interpretations commonly see Lulu as a destructive force, most conveniently described as a femme fatale, thereby insisting that her death at the end of Pandora’s Box (PB) is legitimate. She is seen as a sex maniac, man destroyer, and evil spirit, who does harm to men, but stays intact until the just death.

However, the later scholars developed new insights about the playwright and his plays, pointing out that Wedekind’s former praise was unmerited. They went further than earlier scholars’ approaches to the character Lulu, not only by critiquing the plays with the support of the playwright’s biographical evidence and comparisons with myth and literature, but also by applying literary criticisms to both her and other characters. While taking the same stance that Wedekind was not a true supporter for women, I will examine the aspects of alienation of the character Lulu by closely examining the

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1 Stephen Spender’s English translation of the Lulu plays (1989) is used in this paper. Different citation formats will be seen in the later pages, because PB is divided into Acts only, whereas Earth Spirit (ES) has both Acts and Scenes.

2 There are accounts of Wedekind being groundlessly jealous and suspicious of his wife Tilly Newes, as well as arguments that say he was a much more supportive of women. For example, Frida Strindberg had affair with him, which can be interpreted that he was not as misogynistic as Strindberg was.
play texts. Within the context of modern and postmodern thought\(^3\), I will describe not only the modes of analysis through which she was interpreted, but also Wedekind’s use of power projection and gaze to further her alienation.

The Lulu plays were originally written as one play with the title of **Pandora’s Box: Monster Tragedies**\(^4\). Wedekind divided this into two separate plays, **ES** and **PB**, while adding a new act in each of them. This fact has also been one of the debatable issues on the plays, due to the fact that the plot and the characterizations of the characters, especially Lulu, in the **Pandora’s Box: Monster Tragedies** are quite different in the later version. Also, Lulu in the later divided versions of the play is pointed out to be incongruent. John L. Hibberd points out the differences of Lulu in **ES** and **PB** as following:

Lulu is a woman who seeks not only to maintain control of her own sexuality but in fact to use it against the men who would control her. In this second play, Lulu is conscious of her sexual allure, and in a very calculating, conniving manner, she uses it to her advantage as she manipulates, lies, and cheats to get what she wants. (qtd. in Libbon 56)

Hibberd’s point of view went further from the one that sees Lulu as a mere object of men’s lust, or as an evil spirit who constantly changes herself as a chameleon to destroy men. Rather, it recognizes Lulu’s agency, as will be dealt with in Chapter 3.

One of the accounts given to the possible reason for the difference is that Wedekind was conscious of ceaseless censorship on his plays. Though the first

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\(^3\) Cahoone, *From Modernism* 2. “They [most philosophers] have in mind that this movement [pomo] denies the possibility of objective knowledge of the real world, ‘univocal’ (single or primary) meaning of words and texts, the unity of the human self, the cogency of the distinctions between rational inquiry and political action, literal and metaphorical meaning, science and art, and even the possibility of truth itself”

\(^4\) The birth of the present Lulu plays was a combination of **Der Erdgeist**, “Earth Spirit,” written in 1892-94 in Paris and London and published in 1895 and **Die Büchse der Pandora**, “Pandora’s Box,” written between 1892 and 1901 and published in 1902 and 1904.
reorganization and rewriting of the plays may have been started by the playwright, the diaries and letters show his concerns about his plays being constantly rejected\textsuperscript{5}. The incongruity between ES and PB what in Wedekind’s time was considered a fault and lack of playwriting skill, is now looked at as an attempt to survive in harsh custom of censorship. While some scholars took it at face value, others pointed out that his foreword to the later edition in 1906, which stated that the Countess Geschwitz was the main tragic character, was written thus only to evade censorship\textsuperscript{6}.

The continuous change and alteration of the Lulu plays by the playwright himself, prior to becoming Lulu plays, brought numerous scholars to debate their meaning and caused translators to select and even adapt the plays themselves to come up with the truest meaning of the original texts. Debates have arisen as to whether it is important and right to refer to Wedekind’s biographical facts, such as his stay in Paris, his acquaintance with variete, circus, ballet, and pantomime, or his adaptations of the then-popular literary themes and figures widely known in Germany (Europe), etc.

The textual issue brought another debate when the manuscript of the original one-play was discovered and reconstructed. Translated into English by Eric Bentley in 1993, The First Lulu depicts all the characters quite differently. Edward Bond, who translated and adapted the Lulu plays, commented on The First Lulu as “the first modern play” which is in all aspects modern\textsuperscript{7}, with its extreme sexuality as the central force of the play, with the seemingly non-coherent plot, and the outspoken violence in the end of the play, depicted in Jack the Ripper. These characterizations become more

\textsuperscript{5} That ES succeeded in being put on the stage, while PB did not make it until its 1988’s world premier by Peter Zadek in Hamburg, Germany, shows how strictly the plays have been rejected by the society.

\textsuperscript{6} This was stated by Karl Kraus, who was a close friend of Wedekind and who directed the PB in 1905.

\textsuperscript{7} Bond adapted the plays while concentrating on its capitalist theme; Angela Carter adapted it into a play without making Lulu a femme fatale. However, the latter one was harshly attacked by Peter G. Christensen for it totally misinterpreted the plays. For Carter’s play, see The Curious Room.
dominant and apparent in the film adaptation of the Lulu plays by Pabst, where horror becomes the dominant element (Doane 161).

Though these textual issues have not found a definite answer, the textual techniques and thematic aspects of Wedekind’s plays caused him to be recognized as a modernist. Though not in all theatre history writings, Frank Wedekind has been included in many authoritative texts as a proto-expressionist dramatist. His unique play technique, known as “Aneinander-vorbeireden,” a dialogue in which characters talk past each other, together with his theme of attacking bourgeois society and calling for a new society, are both highly recognized and credited. Bertolt Brecht’s obituary on Wedekind’s death and Wedekind’s inspirational effect on the later American expressionist dramatists such as Eugene O’Neill are among the oft-mentioned credits of Wedekind. Wedekind’s harsh satire on Wilhelmian Germany resulted in the non-illusionist drama, and even led to argument that he showed a precursory use of what later became Bertolt Brecht’s epic-drama, which called for a rational stance toward the play.

It is clear that all the above-mentioned aspects of Wedekind’s playwriting are what he contributed to the theatre. Wedekind’s name, if not his plays, is mentioned in theatre history books in relation to Büchner, who first wrote fragmentary, station-like drama, characteristic of expressionist drama. Hartmut Vicon published in 1987 the first compilation of Wedekind’s life and work, when individual articles were the only published reference to the playwright. As early as 1969, Sol Gittleman published a full-length study of Wedekind, supposedly the first one in English. Also, starting from the 1980s, the arguments on Wedekind took on much diversity. One of the contributing factors is the publication of his diaries, letters, and notebooks.

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8 The effect of this technique is still seen in the contemporary German plays, such as Roland Schimmelpfennig’s Push Up 1-3 and Arabian Night. Both plays are structured with parallel character monologues, whereby the actual dialogues and actions are explained in a flashback manner.
In the past, the biggest reason for lack of scholarly work on Wedekind was the radicality of his sexual themes. Some of his plays, written between the 1890s and 1910s, stayed censored until much later; they could not be published and/or put on the stage. Wedekind’s reputation in his era was very close to ‘a pornographer,’ which he actually was called (82). The publication of his entire literary works, including poems, novels, prose, and drama; and the translation of dramas into English, spurred on both academic and practical approaches to his plays. Seized by the state prosecutor, PB led its author, Wedekind, and its publisher to be sued and put on trial for circulating obscenity. The label of ‘obscenity’ seems to have attracted readers and audiences, despite their caution in reading it or watching it performed.

Before we move on to the new directions and interpretations of Wedekind’s dramas given by scholars after the 1980s, the earlier receptions will be briefly examined. In general, books in the 1920s tend to give a thorough synopsis of the Lulu plays and give accounts on what is happening. Or, as mentioned earlier, there was tendency of regarding the plays as pornographic literature. The themes of scholarly works on the Lulu plays a few years later included hetaerism, vitalism, and Jugendstil. In line with then-popular Romanticism, efforts were given to examine the parallel elements in the Lulu plays with classic literature. These earlier interpretations generally dealt with the depiction and theme of the plays in light of nineteenth century Germany.

Later academic literary criticisms contributed to seeing Wedekind with a different stance. The two prominent different academic stances toward Wedekind since the 1980s are as follows: that Wedekind did not necessarily call for the liberation of women in terms of equality; and, that the playwright himself was a misogynist. The

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9 For the history of the publication reception of Wedekind’s works in general, see Jones, Frank Wedekind: a Bibliographical Handbook.

10 In this thesis, I divided the period of reception history into two, ‘the earlier,’ from the 1900s to 1980s and the later from the 1980s to 1997. Still, ‘the earlier’ is selective in that I excluded those mainly dealing with the plot summaries of the Lulu plays.
latter argument relies on Wedekind’s biographical facts, such as his relationship with numerous prostitutes and women, his affair with Frida Strindberg, the second wife of August Strindberg, his correspondence with elderly women such as Olga Plümacher\textsuperscript{11} who gave him intellectual and inspirational aid, and his married life with the much younger actress, Tilly Newes. Scholars propose the former argument by reinterpreting his representative plays such as \textit{Spring’s Awakening}, the Lulu plays, and lesser known plays, while also relying on the abovementioned biographical facts. The approaches are diverse, as the titles of the books and articles show. To name a few: \textit{Sexual Circus} (Elizabeth Boa), \textit{Commodities of Desire: the Prostitute in Modern German Literature} (Christiane Schönfeld, editor), and \textit{Women in Modern Drama: Freud, Feminism, and European Theatre at the Turn of the Century} (Gail Finney). The common aspect of these book titles is that they deal with sex, desire, prostitutes, and commodity, treating women as goods for certain purposes. Wedekind’s plays, in which girls, prostitutes, and mothers incessantly appear, also lead us to some of the characters of the plays through his poems titled as the names of the female characters\textsuperscript{12}.

The frequent appearance of women in Wedekind’s plays called forth comparisons of the female characters with that of Strindberg, and also observation of Ibsen’s Nora as a prototype of Wedekind’s female characters. In a word, the characteristic of the above-named books and other later scholarly works on Wedekind’s drama, though not all the time overtly shown, is that each takes more or less a feminist stance in reading Wedekind’s plays.

\footnotesize
\begin{enumerate}
\item For her influence on Wedekind, see Kieser, \textit{Benjamin Franklin Wedekind} 244-67.
\item Wendla and Ilse in \textit{Spring’s Awakening}. Wendla is an innocent, naïve girl who gets raped by her classmate; the blame is on her mother and on society, which prohibit the adolescent girl from knowing sexual subjects, such as puberty, child birth, etc. Ilse, a drop-out girl hanging out with bohemian-like artists, stimulates Moritz to shout a “Schrei.” He was about to commit suicide on the spot due to failure in school work; she is known as “child of nature,” close to vitality and life-force of the world.
\end{enumerate}
The following chapters further analyze Lulu as an object of gaze and power, taking into account previous interpretations of the plays and revealing the persistence of Lulu’s multifaceted character in the arts. In Chapter 1, we see the classic readings of the Lulu plays, which include mythology, Marxism, Wedekind’s biographical records, and other literary criticisms. As we will see in the Chapter 2, the feminist readings of the Lulu plays have brought new scope and richer meanings. Chapter 3 of this paper looks at the aspects of the character Lulu as an object of gaze and power. In addition to and contrary to the earlier and recent interpretations, I will argue Lulu as being a victim. She is not a mere victim who suffers and dies, but one who struggles to pursue her definitions of a happy life. Yet, the network of gaze and power is meticulously interwoven, preventing Lulu from surviving in the world. Lulu does not attempt to escape from this world. She manages the treatment as an object given by the playwright well. Yet, it is very contrary to her nature: she also realizes that “to love to order is beyond me” (III.3.49). Lulu’s mistake is that she attempted to “belong” to Dr. Schön, the authoritative, ruling class, by getting married to him. At the end, though I see her as a victim of gaze and power within the context of the plays, Lulu as a character is very significant in that she is heralding what is to come in our world.
Chapter One

Receptions of the Lulu Plays from 1900s to 1980s

I. Receptions of Wedekind

Written in 1987, Hartmut Vinçon’s Frank Wedekind has been the authoritative bibliographical essay of Wedekind’s life and work and reception history until 1985. As Vinçon writes himself, there had not been any critical interpretations of Wedekind’s works as a whole. Vinçon surveys the research on Wedekind, not only the status of publication and reception, but also the playwright’s letters, diaries and biographies, placing them under thematic sections. He also gives abundant lists for each section. In order to examine trends in those earlier interpretations of the Lulu plays, this chapter will cover the early receptions of the interpretations, mainly through Vinçon’s bibliographical essay and Ward Lewis’ article, “Lulu (1895, 1904) Female Sexual Liberation and Societal Reaction,” in which Lewis lists various scholars’ interpretations starting from 1905.

Overall, the studies on the Lulu plays concentrated on “who and what Lulu really was” (195). The studies mainly focused on the character Lulu’s nature, origin, and function, giving interpretations that she was a non-human creature, powerful at destroying men; like Eve or Pandora, she brought ill consequences. Opposing this idea was an examination of Lulu as a representative of the self or of the human being in a capitalist society, along with the idea of Lulu as a representation of sex as a commodity. Each scholar either relied on the literary resources and/or socio-economical circumstances of nineteenth century Germany. Also, personal documents of Wedekind, such as his diaries, letters, and notebooks, were taken as the main evidence for fully understanding Wedekind’s work.

Vinçon specifically deals with the Lulu plays, ending the section with a bibliography of literature on the plays (188-204). The last entry year is 1981.
The trends in the first era can be divided into three rough categories: the character Lulu as the femme fatale (destructive force, hetaera); Lulu as a mythical figure (ill-boding, double); and Lulu as a human being. In any case, Lulu is a tool of the playwright for mocking the Wilhelminian German society. In this era, the focus was almost solely on the interpretation of Lulu’s nature. She was understood foremost as a “femme fatale,” “urweibliches Geschöpf” ‘primordial female creature,’ “ein Instinktwesen” ‘a being of instinct,’ “eine dramatische Gestaltung des Vampirs Weib” ‘a dramatic figuration of vampire female,’ “der verkörperte Geschlechtstrieb” ‘the embodiment of sexual drive’ (qtd. in Florack 174). Similarly, Vinçon compiled the scholarly interpretations of Lulu as the following: “die personifizierte Sexualität” ‘the personified sexuality,’ “das Prinzip weiblicher Sexualität” ‘the principle of female sexuality,’ “das Urweib” ‘the primordial female,’ “das Weib als Verführerin” ‘female as seducer,’ “die Nymphomanin” ‘nymphomaniac,’ “das Weib als zerstörische Kraft” ‘female as destructive power,’ “das tödliche Lebensprinzip” ‘fatal life’s principle’ (Vinçon 188). In short, Lulu’s being is almost solely defined by her sexual power and her ability to cause disasters.

As we will see later in this chapter, the interpretations of Lulu define the reading of the whole play. The scholarship on the Lulu plays can be roughly divided into the negative reception of Lulu and the positive reading of Lulu; either her innocence and naivety, or destructiveness and agility, or yet another view of seeing her as possessing both of these opposing character traits. Lulu was interpreted either as an ideal being of naturalistic ethic, “a being of nature” unfettered by social rules or, as Artur Kutscher, the renowned editor of Wedekind’s plays and biographies interpreted her, “a personification of female sexual desire” (qtd. in Vinçon 191). The idea that she appears to be perfectly naïve and guiltless brought her other labels such as “Heilige und Hure” ‘holy and whore’ (Florack 42), which also presents the idea of her being ambivalent in the later receptions.
II. Interpreting Wedekind’s Purpose

The idea of Lulu as a personification of female erotic delight also has a basis in the view that Wedekind created the figure in order to attack the hypocritical morals of nineteenth century bourgeois society. Lewis writes, “Wedekind speaks of the difference between bourgeois morality, which is protected by the judicial system, and human morality, which transcends all earthly justice and is based in a deeper, more comprehensive knowledge of the nature of the human being and of the world. [...] Society characterizes her [Lulu’s] behavior as immoral, and tragedy is engendered by the conflict between the two moral systems” (31). Closely related to this argument is the philosophical application made by Friedrich Rothe. Rothe approached Wedekind’s work in “lebensphilosophischen Thematik,” ‘the theme of vitalism.’ Here, arts and reality, nature and society are opposed (135); specifically, Wedekind wanted to show how the bourgeois society was distant from human life by supporting the theme of vitalization of sexuality (140). Edson Chick sees the Lulu plays alludes “to the worship of sexuality and fertility that was summed up in the trope of ‘heilige Erde’ (sacred earth)” (26). Lulu as Nature is in opposition to the society. Opposite to Lulu is also the world, the morality of which is established by males (Irmer 134). In terms of Freudian theory, Lulu is the pleasure principle that cannot but be in fundamental conflict with Dr. Schön, the representation of the reality principle (Gittleman 73). Thus, Lulu’s numerous encounters of men who eventually die are harsh battles between two opposing forces that cannot coexist. By boldly depicting sexual themes in a repressive society, Wedekind was read as a supporter and precursor of a society without sexual repression.

Religious Meaning

As Irmer mentions, Lulu as a liberating figure is sometimes linked with a religious theme. As Eve ate the apple, thereby leading herself and her husband to become true humans, a woman is to free human beings from the godly order. Lulu’s “demonic power, which does not belong in Schön’s world” (135), opposes it. A related
interpretation to this is to see the Lulu plays as “a hymn to erotic liberation” (Lewis 29), which eventually leads to social liberation. This aspect has served as the rationale for hailing Wedekind as the precursor of expressionist drama, which not only called for human beings’ liberation, represented by sexual liberation, but also from the old society supposedly constructed by old God.

**Lulu as a Riddle**

Similar to the incomprehensibility of Lulu’s character to the bourgeois society, scholars tended to point out the uncertainty about Lulu’s nature. Kutscher Kraus sees Lulu as “the personification of the female sexual drive that stands in the center of Life and destroys” (qtd. in Rothe 38). In Lewis’ words, Kraus “characterizes Lulu as a maze of femininity, a labyrinth in which a fellow might lose track of his senses” (29). This notion of Lulu as a riddle, difficult to decipher and understand by male scholars, came under great scrutiny by the later scholars, especially by females, the majority of whom were feminists.

**Marxism/Capitalism**

Another approach to the interpretation of the Lulu plays was in terms of Marxist ideas. As mentioned before, in contrast to interpretations of Lulu as a destructive, ill-boding figure who ruthlessly brings men to death as they succumb to her sexual power, other scholars approached her as a victim. These scholars looked at the plays in light of Lulu’s relationship with the society. Hans-Jochen Irmer in a Marxist interpretation saw that “Lulu reflects the self of the human being in capitalist society” (Lewis 36). Edward Bond also approaches the plays from a Marxist point of view, to whom “capitalism is Total Money and it takes over all things” (66). Whereas culture is what makes our humanness possible, “money disturbs the balance that is culture,” and it attaches itself particularly to sex because sex is fundamental and protean” (67). Thus, the “over-

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14 Cahoone notes, “Postmodernism […] denies the possibility of returning to, recapturing, or even representing the origin, source, or any deeper reality behind phenomena, and casts doubt on or even denies its existence” (15).
determined” sex due to the dynamic of money “creates a vacuum, an objectless behaviour,’ after it becomes Total Sex. Lulu, “an unlimited sexuality” (65), “is capitalism’s prophetic history” and this critique “shows sex as the victim not the aggressor” (68). Both interpretations focus on the inhuman function the capitalist society creates for people.

Close to this interpretation is the argument that sex has become a commodity. Elizabeth Boa takes this further to the section of art, that “Art is an extension of socially rooted alienation and in bourgeois society is a commodity just as sex is” (Sexual Circus 73). On the contrary, Finney argues anything but art for art’s sake (96). Rather, she points out Lulu’s being a commodity by citing Irigaray’s statement that “Western culture is based on the exchange of women. […] Women are products of men’s labor and hence serve as signs of male power” (97).

III. The Archetypal Readings of Lulu

What the earlier scholars came up with in regard to deciphering the character Lulu shows us the rich literary tradition of Germany in that particular period of time. Lulu is read as an emblem of femme fatale, Pandora, Evil Spirit, and the ‘eternal feminine’ and also to find parallel figures in literature of the nineteenth century Germany.

Lulu as a Femme Fatale

Out of the many interpretations offered, Lulu as “femme fatale” is by far the most dominant reading. This approach portrays her as a physicalization of sexuality which conquers one man after another, while constantly changing her name. According to this view, her mighty female sexual power captures men and destroys them. As frequently witnessed in abundant literature from the late nineteenth century European literature to the early twentieth century, the femme fatale later came to be regarded as a

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15 Vinçon summarizes this interpretation of Lulu as an “art figure.”
social phenomenon of the fin-de-siecle\textsuperscript{16}. Other female protagonists, such as Salome by Oscar Wilde, Nana by Emil Zola, or even Miss Julie by Strindberg, all who function against customs and patriarchal society, are considered to be in the same category. In defense of the feminist point of view, these female characters are recognized as criticizing the social vice and corruption of the nineteenth century; their irresistible charm, power, or characters challenging the conventions of society.

That female characters function as a device for criticizing society was not far from the artistic tradition of Jugendstil\textsuperscript{17}. Jugendstil, most popular in the late nineteenth century German, emphasized joy of life, and exotic themes, and focused on deforming objects and the world. Although Jugendstil focuses a great deal on Wedekind’s early work, \textit{Spring’s Awakening}, it has also dealt with the Lulu plays. Elizabeth Boa formulates it as “the idea of the naturally good but soulless spirit of nature who bridges the Christian and pastoral traditions” (\textit{Sexual Circus} 64). Lulu’s pierrot costume with a shepherd’s crook represents “the twin themes of art and nature,” (61) creating “a Jugendstil image of epicene youth, an appropriate dream for the old aesthete Goll” (61). Similarly, John Elsom stated in 1974 that “at the turn of the century, when the ‘official’ view was that women did not have any sexual pleasures at all [...] Wedekind asserted the opposite—Lulu personified female erotic delight” (qtd. in Vinçon 195). Again, the emphasis is placed upon the female eros closely bound with Nature. Related with visual art, the effect provided an emphasis on the body of women, and women as embodiments of nature.

\textbf{Lulu as a Mythical Figure}

\textsuperscript{16} Fin-de-siecle (End of the century). “The 1890s were a transition in which artists were consciously abandoning old ideas and attempting to discover new techniques. [...] When the term fin-de-siecle is used about a literary work, it usually is in the sense of decadence or presiosity.” See Harman, \textit{A Handbook}, 210.

\textsuperscript{17} The German word Jugendstil is equivalent to ‘art nouveau.’
The next mode of interpreting Lulu comes more directly from mythology. The title of the second part of the Lulu plays, PB, was seen to be directly related to Lulu; Lulu was read as Pandora, since she was the one who brought unhappiness to the world. The box of Pandora, which transformed from a jar, is also read as the female genitalia or womb. In a sense, Lulu has been understood as a non-human force who was created to destroy men, as Eve was deceived by a serpent and also brought Adam astray from God, who cursed both of them. Pandora, who was created by Zeus, opened the box, causing various evil spirits to escape and spread throughout the world. Some of the related comments are made by the first commenter on Wedekind’s work, Karl Kraus, who called Lulu “Genussspenderin” ‘giver of pleasure’ (qtd. in Vinçon 190). As Lewis states, hetaerism and the myths of Pandora and Eve were applied to discern the figure of Lulu (30). The idea of hetaerism is in the same line as looking at Lulu as a prostitute who brings death and disease to men. That Lulu is related to pleasure and burden is well explained in hetaerism. Hetaerism, which also comes from Greek tradition, has been suggested by Höger. With the abundance of female archetypes in the classical literature, Lulu took on more diverse lives than any other female character in literature.

**Earth Spirit – Evil Spirit**

As they did with PB, scholars also looked to the title of ES for the probable meaning of Lulu and the plays. “Earth Spirit” occurs in Goethe’s Faust, which is generally believed to be where Wedekind took it from. Boa writes that Goethe’s Earth Spirit “was a demon, the spirit of natural creation,” (Sexual Circus 60) which “threatens to annihilate although it is the source of all life” (59). “The term Erdgeist may refer to the evil earth-spirit emanated by repressive society, ‘the seduction and corruption of the human ideal’ to which Lulu succumbs” (34). Boa points out the relationship between

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18 For the change in different versions of Pandora’s myth from the medieval to Victorian periods, including helpful drawings of her, see Panofski, Pandora’s Box.
Pandora and earth spirit by referring to the fact that Pandora was an earth spirit “fashioned from clay by Hephaestus” (61). Thus, we can already notice contradictory interpretations of scholars that originated from the same classical source. This leads us to understand Lulu as the central source of criticism, and her attraction has drawn diverse interpretations from various scholars.

Other Allegories

Alongside Lulu as a destructive mythological or a spiritual force, the notion of being non-human led to the conception of her by many scholars as being unrepresentative of a human figure. These scholars relate this abstract notion of her to “Ewig-Weibliche,” the ‘eternal feminine’ of Goethe, a classic notion in German Romantic literature. Whereas this relates to divine femininity, Lulu is also seen as a prostitute, sometimes a mixture of both. Again, this notion of a woman being holy and seductive at the same time is the prevalent theme of German literature in the era of Wedekind. The idea of Lulu being symbolic can be also approached from textual grounds, as proposed by Paul Fechter in 1920, who described her as “a formation in the imagination of those who live with her” (45). “Lulu is a destiny, a fate, a principle – not a human, only a female” (45).

Literary Parallels

Lastly, Lulu was examined with the figures associated with her given names: Nelli, Mignon, and Eve, and with parallel characters in Wedekind’s other plays. These names were seen as projections of each male character’s expectations of Lulu. In a word, the origin, meaning, and parallel of each name were detected, and then applied to interpreting the traits of the male characters, who use the name when they call Lulu. Mignon, the famous girl in Goethe’s Wilhelm Meister’s Lehrjahre, shares the characteristics of androgyny, pre-puberty (Boa, Sexual Circus 62), asexuality, and the fact that she wants to become the wife of the old man when she reaches puberty. In Elin’s Awakening, the female character with name of Ella is adopted by a beggar named
Schigolch, and is raised as a prostitute by him. Like in the Lulu plays, nobody knows where Schigolch found Lulu (Irmer 132). The ballerina Taglioni, to whom Dr. Schön compares Lulu as “the second Taglioni,” (III.1.64) was a historical figure who symbolized groundbreaking in that she put off toe shoes and danced in barefoot. This soon symbolized a free spirit that is also linked with Lulu and her childlike trait, as Irmer sees her as “Lilith with childlike guiltlessness” (133). “Her apparent childlike quality suggests the child’s closeness to nature, a salient motif in Romantic literature” (Sexual Circus 63).

In sum, Lulu as femme fatale, hetaera, Pandora or Eve, strongly presents her as a “giver of pleasure” as well as the bringer of some unlucky outcome19. Taking abundant literary sources as support, the Lulu figure is solidly based on the preexisting representations of literary figures.

**Reading the Lulu Plays**

A diagnosis of Lulu’s background and origin out of literary criticism and a consultation on Wedekind’s personal documents, although different, show common features that concentrate on Lulu’s power over men and their behaviors. Whether she is a mythic, primordial figure, or a figure modeled on prostitutes Wedekind had met in Paris, these interpretations tend to be one-sided or limited. Lulu was interpreted as being too distant from society (mythic figure), or a too prominent femme fatale (a prostitute, a hetaera). A common approach to reading Lulu was to see her as an allegory that links the two territories; scholars read that Wedekind used the character Lulu to make his contemporaries witness the situation. Also, by posing her as an allegory of the extreme embodiment of sexual power, the foundation of human society, he was read to say that such a natural force had no place in the bourgeois society, resulting ultimately in death.

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19 As Panofsky explains in his beforementioned book, Pandora’s name was misprinted from “omnium munus” ‘gift to all’ to “omnium minus” ‘devoid of everything” (11).
The opposing interpretations derived from Lulu as femme fatale are also applied to the reading of Lulu’s death. Jack the Ripper, who enters at the end of PB and kills Lulu (along with two more people), is undoubtedly the famous serial killer in London who was known to be psychopathic. To the scholars who see Lulu as a destroyer of men and a polluter of the society by her immoral deeds, Lulu deserves death; Lulu’s death by the Jack the Ripper was quite natural. Also, that Lulu is killed by Jack the Ripper at the end of PB was generally interpreted as something natural and logical. Lulu gets the proper punishment, the excision of her uterus, with which she lured men.

On the other hand, not focusing on the function of Jack the Ripper as much, her death is read as the result of her deeds. Representing sexuality, “she destroys herself” (qtd. in Vinçon 190). Rothe “sees Lulu’s death as the consequence of unlimited lust and the loss of the battle of the sexes to a sadist, while the latter [Hahn] perceives in Jack the ultimate satisfaction of Lulu’s continuous need for sexual possession” (Lewis 33). It is notable that in either case, Jack the Ripper is not seen as a bad person. A character who is based on a real criminal takes on life as a symbolic problem-solver of the unraveled society caused by Lulu. Here, Jack is the revenger of the men who died because of her—cutting her body part out and putting an end to her performance. The scholars’ view of seeing a sadist as a revenger of society is a point of view that favors males and overlooks women’s value.

Chapter Summary

As a whole, the early receptions of Wedekind’s Lulu plays concentrated on interpreting the characters in light of the literary traditions of Wedekind’s era. Wedekind might have consulted such mythology, Goethe’s literary characters, and Jugendstil, but they are also interpreted on account of Marxist social ideas, and suggest the possibility of basing the figure Lulu on one of the prostitutes Wedekind encountered during his stays in Paris. Furthermore, the characters have been interpreted by finding literary parallel figures from the past.
Another element that the earlier interpretations have focused on was the names of the characters. The scholars gave attention to the fact that some of the main characters had historically equivalent figures in Wedekind’s time of Germany. For example, Dr. Schön was Dr. Schöning in the original play, which was then the name of a newspaper agency owner, Ferdinand Schöning (1815-83). Also, Dr. Goll was the name of a renowned Swiss doctor (1829-1903) at Zürich university hospital. Schigolch is known to be a name made by the German word ‘logisch,’ which means ‘logical.’ With his pimp-like characteristics, he is also read to be representing sexual vigor and natural force, who alone among the main characters survives to the end of the plays. Geschwitz is also known to be a combination of two German words, either related to “Schwein” (pig) or “das Geschwätz” (blabber). This approach to the characters’ names is consistent with the Wedekind’s widely-known use of satirical names.

Also presented were masochism and sado-masochism in the Lulu plays as it was already shown in Spring’s Awakening, when depicting highschool girls and boys. In the Lulu plays, Dr. Schön is said to have used a whip when flirting with Lulu, which he might have referred to Dr. Goll as well. With Sigmund Freud in the era, the early Wedekind interpretations often pointed out depictions of sadism, masochism, and sado-masochism themes in the plays. The trend of Wedekind’s reception, along with literary criticism, has changed its focus toward the political aspects of Wedekind’s playwriting, such as whether the representation of Wedekind is feminist or not. So, as more interpretations of Wedekind’s works have come out, contrary points of view on Wedekind’s stance toward women are presented: that he respected females by hailing femininity or sexual power, or that he merely exercised male privileges. In the case of Lulu, that he in fact had no intention of depicting and praising her female charm and

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20 Paul Fechter points out how the Countess Geschwitz is never in the center of actions, despite all her sacrifices in the plays. He observes how she becomes passive; though she moves within the circle with the male characters, she is going in the opposite direction (57). Dr. Schön is traditionally perceived as representing “reality principle” on the account of Wedekind.
power came out as what later scholars have realized. Some of these ideas will be built upon as more recent interpretations of Lulu are presented in the next chapter.
In the 1980s, when literary critics were burgeoning with Lacanian theories and wider recognition of feminist readings, scholarly activities on Wedekind’s literature and life took greater liveliness than ever before. Many sources of criticism were now readily available, spanning from Wedekind’s own diaries, letters, and notebooks to feminist and psychoanalytical essays on the plays. The scholarly activities of the previous era, led by Vinçon, concentrated on Freudian terms and biographical events and documents in interpreting Wedekind’s works. Then ‘die Frank-Wedekind-Gesellschaft Darmstadt’\textsuperscript{21}, the Wedekind circle in Germany, was formed in 1989 with the objective of broadening critical approaches to the whole of Wedekind’s literary works. This group also inspired the further publication of scholarly work on Wedekind.

This chapter explores the contrasting but sometimes overlapping approaches, namely a continued biographical approach to Wedekind’s works, and the feminist readings which take a fresh look on the works and ideas of Wedekind. These are most meaningfully attempted by psychoanalysis and film studies.

I. Interpreting Within the Tradition

While a newer approach was becoming more popular, the traditional approaches of biographical and works-oriented research were still used in this period.

Biographical vs Theoretical Approach

As with many other traditionally European academic practices, the German scholar Ruth Florack concentrates on the biographical and social background of the playwright and his environment. Florack, compiling the reception history of the Lulu

\textsuperscript{21} Hartmut Vinçon is the founder and leader of this circle, who also established an “Editions- und Forschungsstelle Frank Wedekind.” Visit \url{http://www.wedekind.fh-darmstadt.de/FWG.html}.\n
plays, calls her ‘amoral,’ in contrast to the typically immoral femme fatale, exemplified by Emil Zola’s Nana and Wilde’s Salome figures. Also, she refutes the possibility of Champsaur’s pantomime “Lulu” to be Wedekind’s resource in Paris, which was first proposed by Artur Kutscher. Kutscher, who states that the French source was valid (Vinçon 194), states that the model of Lulu is taken from a circus Loulou, which Wedekind is to have seen in 1888 while he was staying in Paris. Lastly, Florack examines not only the exemplified femme fatale figures, such as Emil Zola’s Nana and Wilde’s Salome, but also the femme enfante, the ‘child woman’ (51).

Psychoanalysis and feminist studies focused on portraying the character Lulu and her representations in relation to her sexuality, which was the main trait that caused her to be called ‘femme fatale,’ as mentioned previously. They do not exclude her probable origin, mythology, and evaluation of other characters in the plays, but their emphasis lies more on interpretative aspects of feminist readings. For example, the father-son relationship between Dr. Schön and Alwa Schön was interpreted as a conflict caused by the oedipal complex (Bond 65).

Another important area of criticism closely related to the reading of the Lulu plays are film studies. With a film adaptation of the plays in 1929 by Pabst, the criticisms on the plays not only brought a wider range of interpretations, but also increased understandings of Lulu in light of her relationship with other characters, including the idea of gaze. Women, taken as the sexual object of male gaze, have been placed in a passive and inferior state. This very argument on image of femininity or image of women is also applicable to Lulu. Mulvey pointed out that “in patriarchal

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22 This French Pantomime as a resource is referred again in Vinçon’s bibliographical essay, from which many authors cite it as a fact (194).
23 As Florack states, Kutscher referred to the “Clownesse danseuse” in Champsaur’s pantomime “Lulu” to be a source material for Wedekind, which was premiered in 1888 in Parisian Nouveau Cirque. Opposing to this, Florack suggests the main character Lili in Catulle Mendes’ book “La Femme-Enfant” as a model for Lulu in the Lulu plays. See 17-34. In addition to this, Florack suggests another feuilleton-literature, Gyp’s “Mademoiselle Loulou.”
culture, the image of femininity is a multipurpose signifier” (Sexuality and Space 57), and Doane also provides great examples of film analysis that serve to gaze/desire analysis. The “multipurpose” can be understood as the abundant ways or meanings the image of femininity provide us in terms of understanding social, ideological assumptions that are lying behind.

**The First Lulu**

Found in 1988, the manuscript version of the original one-play is rather questionable. As been noted by Libbon, Lulu in The First Lulu is “anything but the innocent, child-like being Wedekind professes he intended her to be. She is instead the incarnation of a femme fatale, the woman whose sexuality lures men to their deaths” (56). Whether Wedekind really attempted to criticize the social aspects of nineteenth century Germany by the female character Lulu’s frequent and liberal affair and adultery is questionable. Yet, when we take the male characters into account, who utterly are trapped by lust in Lulu’s presence, it becomes obvious that Wedekind wanted to satirize them. Also, Lulu’s representation in labels such as “destructive force” and “embodiment of sexual drive” as we’ve seen earlier appear as valid descriptions for her. Then, considering the censorship, the Lulu plays which have gone through various alterations and cuts may have been altered in order to be accepted by society. Thus, the Lulu plays should be perceived as such, to have the characteristics of the nineteenth century society; in order to compensate for the cuts and alterations of Lulu’s sexual liberty and upfront flirtations with various male characters in the original play, the playwright must have extracted his ideas from the original play. Except that the addition of the Prologue to ES and the bookstore scene to PB seem to be tools for excusing and defending himself, the character Lulu should be seen as what Wedekind actually wanted to portray. The representational aspects around Lulu will be dealt with in the Chapter 3.
II. Interpretations of Lulu

Lulu’s representational meanings have been looked at both in the classic notion of Muses, and women as prostitutes and commodities as the depiction of them became more prevalent than the previous images of passive, submissive, and obedient women in Western literature.

Lulu as a Muse

With the advent of 1980s, various labels that had been unproblematically used for women began to be critiqued. Though they might not be fully discarded, their meanings have been dramatically changed. In her article on Wedekind’s diaries and Kafka’s letters to his fiancée, Boa explores how both writers treated “women as source of inspiration yet annoying distraction” (Yearbook 81) and she evaluates this as “a peculiarly nasty extension of the social oppression of women” (Yearbook 82). By comparing the depictions of women in these writings of the two writers, she asserts that “they resist reduction to their image in the writer’s imagination, thus threatening the power of the pen” (Yearbook 83). Furthermore, when referring to Wedekind’s diary comments and writings on cafes in Berlin and Paris, Boa describes them as the “disjunction between free-ranging desire and intellectual recognition of exploitation” by the author (Yearbook 85). Stating that Wedekind’s works can only be adequately understood in consulting the social background of his time, such as “the explosive rise of urban prostitution and the simultaneous emergence of women as a political constituency” (Yearbook 87), Boa successfully points out the limitation of the previous laudatory critics on Wedekind and the Lulu plays as follows: “The ambiguity of Lulu as an actual woman and a figure in the imagination of the men in the play is thus a reflection on the extraliterary ambiguity of the author’s relations with the Parisian whores” (Yearbook 87). This point of view stems from the traditional functions of the Muse, who “animates, stirs up, excites, [and] arouses” (Nancy 1). Yet, the Muses from Boa’s point of view deviate from the traditional functions they are given. Thus, Boa’s
closing sentence in her arguments on Wedekind’s diary presents us a unique standpoint on the exalted playwright:

Wedekind’s works do show a battle with mighty predecessors who engendered archetypes of the feminine such as Eve, Helen, or Mignon and assert primacy by mastering nature anew; but it also shows a dawning recognition in that the true opponents were not the poet-predecessors, but contemporary women who, whether as exploited prostitutes, oppressed wives, or aspiring intellectuals and writers, refused to be conformed to suit the specifications of male intellectuals: the Muses were in revolt. (Yearbook 88)

Thus, women began to be read as having contradicting characteristics in comparison to the previous male dominated points of view which subconsciously forced certain images on the women, such as obedience, frailty, commitment, etc. This is also related to the investigation of Lulu’s agency.

**Lulu as a Prostitute**

Another interpretation within the social timeframe can be found in the depiction of prostitutes in literature. *Commodities of Desire: The Prostitute in Modern German Literature*, mainly focusing on the depiction of prostitutes in German drama, films, and novels, takes us to such a world. The opposing notions of bourgeois morality and natural morality as claimed by earlier scholars are illustrated by the character Lulu, and developed into the reading of Lulu as an object of exchange: a commodity. In this book, Schönfeld places the prostitute as a fully recognized subject with agency:

[...] the bourgeois faith in the appearance of Wilhelmine society and culture was shattered by expressionism in the prostitutes’ mirror. Poverty, sickness, violence, and despair, but also the prostitutes’ erotic and creative potential are represented (111-2).

Therefore, the portrayal of Lulu is seen in the light of prostitution. In short, Lulu is regarded as “one of the most famous harlots in German literature” (Schönfeld 5), and
she is “depicted to arouse attention, to shock and even threaten, but also to entertain” (5). All the prostitutes in German literature of this period are meant to serve this purpose (5). This is in a sense the continuation of the previous interpretation seen in Chapter 1, Lulu as a hetaera. However, whereas the prostitutes read by the German scholars are active in that they have agency and liberty, Lulu in the Lulu plays does not show such possession. As we will see in Chapter 3, Lulu is rather a trained and fettered being in the plays.

Whereas the argument of looking at Lulu as one of the prostitutes carries less problematic connotations, Libbons’ arguments of seeing Lulu as a commodity go beyond Lulu’s label as prostitute and into Wedekind’s personal views of women.

**Lulu as a Commodity**

The view of Lulu as a commodity is based on the argument that Wedekind was far from supporting “the unhindered expression of natural sexuality in all children” in *Spring’s Awakening* (Libbon 47). It was not necessarily a Marxist point of view. However, Wedekind was “in fact advocating only the experience of unhampered male pleasure” (47). Accordingly, “although female sexuality is no longer “under training” as in the previous work, it is still kept under control by being confined to a limited space within society” (51). Focus is now on the underlying idea or probable stance of the playwright Wedekind, as to how he viewed women in general, and how he wove his view into his plays. Whether overtly or implicitly, the purposes of the contemporary scholars in interpreting Wedekind are to re-consider or re-think both him and his works; at the same time, the scope of studies on Wedekind study have also been broadened into other plays, citing them as additional evidence for drawing such a conclusion.

**Femme Fatale: A Combination of Muse, Prostitute, and Commodity**

The stage for femme fatale has existed ever since human beings were created. As it is found in abundant works of literature, the femme fatale has been enough to merit
much examination and investigation. A great contribution to examining the theme of femme fatale is offered by film studies, since “the cinema [is born under] the mark of such a modernity as a technology of representation” (Doane, 2). Doane also sees the femme fatale as a “symptom of male fears about feminism” (2), which indicates that men were bothered and disturbed by women’s liberation movements.

In contrast to this, Mulvey points out the positive function of the femme fatale as, “while the seductive woman encapsulates a surface/secret split, she becomes a figure for the potential revelation of a hidden truth” (Myth of Pandora 13-14). Jans Wager proceeds also with “rethinking paradigms” in that she tries to “rethink and redefine not only the subject of Weimar street film and film noir, but the representation of women in these films as well” (15).

Born out of the male imagination, Lulu as the femme fatale is a combination of Muse and prostitute, which is treated as a commodity. She is also to have affinities with the femme enfante, which was also a fin-de-siecle phenomenon. Here the childlike and innocent traits of the female character are emphasized rather than her destructive aspects.

**Lulu in Revolt**

When seen in the positive way, Lulu is given an identity as a Muse by the two titles of the plays, ES and PB. However, as Boa mentioned, if she is a Muse, she is “in revolt” (88). That is, she would not stay in the place she was assigned by the patriarchal hierarchy. Also, if Lulu is a prostitute, she is ‘the most famous’ one, not a minor or improminent one. This is one of the initial feminist readings that approach Lulu from a different point of view, putting both the play and the playwright under the scrutiny.

As mentioned earlier, some feminists refused psychoanalysis on the account of its being a male-oriented logical system. That is, even in Lacanian theories which place the phallus as the center, power, and law, women inevitably get interpreted as “lack,”
absent, or inferior. Instead, feminists such as Irigaray and Kristeva argue that women should be seen from a different point of view, while discarding any male-centered one. Thus, women become interpreted as double and multiple instead of split, and as excessive instead of lacking. Karin Littau’s article specifically articulates such an approach to the Lulu plays, basing her arguments on the idea that “the Lulu-figure […] has been the object of numerous transformations” (888). Littau accounts that “Lulu is not split, but always doubled, that is, multiplied, leaving Schön both horrified at his mere oneness and structurally avenged when Jack finally kills her. (893). Again, it is men’s fear and dissatisfaction from perceiving women as not easily understandable or from seeing that the women seem to have various characteristics whereas they have only one. Mulvey observed how “the female figure […] connotes to the male viewer the lack of a penis, implying a threat of castration and hence unpleasure” (qtd. in Finney 91).

Contrary to this account, Pandora is, in fact, “not a void, [she] does not lack, but transports excess,” too (Littau 899).

Littau supports her argument that Pandora transports excess by tracing the creation myths. As earlier scholars had noted, Pandora has two meanings: “all-giver” and “giver for all.” She is also sometimes depicted contrastingly, either a sinner to the world by opening the box, or an innocent, when her husband is to open it out of curiosity. In either case, she proves the feminist arguments of women having an ‘Other.’ In contrast to men, women are capable of accepting and acknowledging foreignness or otherness, since biologically women have ‘two lips,’ thereby always having a place for ‘the Other.’

**Agency of Female Characters**

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24 Luce Irigaray, *The Sex Which is Not One*.

25 For more info on how ‘the Other’ is adopted as an issue in feminist discourse, see Kitzinger and Wilkinson.
In addition to rebutting being split and lacking as decided by male psychoanalysts, feminists focused on recognizing the agency of women or female characters in literature. That is also what the new points of view on the Muse and prostitutes have in common. In case of the Lulu plays, Boa accounts Lulu’s agency in terms of her role playing, in that her “power to act is an expression of personality and a conscious creative activity” (57). “She acts only out of desire, never out of duty” (58), for which Dr. Schön’s accounts of Lulu’s having a sense of duty “cannot be taken at face value” (58). All in all, “she consciously chooses to act and enjoys her own skill” (56). Recognized also are Lulu’s “motives, pleasure and the will to survive” which are in conflict with the bourgeois society (57).

**Lulu as the phallus**

Libbon’s critique that “Wedekind viewed the emancipated woman as an aberration harmful to society and presented her as a social deviant and frustrated misfit” (54) is fully developed in Lynda Hart’s arguments on the Countess Geschwitz, the lesbian character in the Lulu plays. Hart gives a full interpretation on the Lulu plays in chapter 3 of her book, which looks at Lulu as a “representation of aggressive ‘women’” (Fatal Women ix). Though Hart’s primary aim lies in highlighting the lesbian figure, Geschwitz, her argument only stands for the figure Lulu, who she poses as the counterpart of Geschwitz. By placing Geschwitz as “a shadow of Lulu” (51), she explains that “the terrible power that Lulu holds emanates from her ability to lure, to fascinate her suitors while remaining indifferent to them” (59). So, in the article entitled “Enter the Invert: Frank Wedekind’s Lulu Plays,” she sums up Finney’s use of Mulvey’s theories as follows: “Lulu, as fetishized spectacle, is the phallus, the location for the hallucinatory return of that which is lacking” (56). She moves on to say that “Lulu’s femininity is not aberrant; on the contrary she is Woman at her ‘purest and truest.’ […] what is an aberration is femininity as essence. When this impossible-real is manifested,

26 In Lacanian terms, the phallus is symbolic rather than physical reference.
it is inexorably murderous” (56). In a word, Lulu is again a figure who possesses far more than she is allowed to. In the eyes of the male-dominated society, she should not dare to attempt to fulfill the potential she does, and she is punished for it.

**Death of Geschwitz**

The worried men who killed Lulu also kill Geschwitz, whose act is “the removal of the intelligent, potentially emancipated woman who gains her pleasure outside the heterosexual economy” (qtd. in Hart 57). Again, the basis of the argument is that “once industrialization destabilized centuries-old gender roles, both private and public, men felt increasingly marginalized and vulnerable” (57). Yet, this view is less probable than others, since the late nineteenth century society when Wedekind wrote his Lulu plays were utterly male-dominant, not to mention that he himself lived such a life.

**Threat of Autonomous Women**

This attempt to state the limitation of Wedekind’s writing in terms of sexual emancipation of women, as perceived by men, continues to describe the social circumstance as being fearful of active women. As pointed out by Stephanie Libbon, “the growing threat of autonomous as well as sexually active women coupled with increasing inability of the male to control the women produced this image of female decadence” (53). By interpreting Wedekind’s views in the light of the social and literary issues of the nineteenth century Germany, Libbon comments that “in contrast to many conservatives of his day, it was not the sexually active woman or the prostitute per se that Wedekind saw as a threat, but rather only the self-governing woman—the prostitute without a pimp” (54). In short, women who deviated from the conventional notions of ‘women,’ who could be distinguished by the possession and exercise of power, be it physical, psychological, or intellectual, came to threaten men’s long-held status as the controller.

**III. Film Criticism**
Film criticisms, especially that of the 1920s with G. W. Pabst’s filmed version of PB, give great insight on reading female figures portrayed in the films in that era. In case of the Lulu plays, important aspects of the plays are effectively delivered through camera work.

**Eye, Gaze, Deception**

The application of film criticism on the Lulu plays contributes to deciphering it in terms of image, fantasy, and gaze. Laplanche and Pontalis, supporters of Freudian theories, state that “Fantasy, ‘is not the object of desire but its setting’” (qtd. in Wager 6). To use Wager’s words again, “in fantasy, ‘the spectator engages in multiple identifications, and in its filmic scenarios may identify with several figures simultaneously, women and men, winners and losers, heroes and villains, the active and passive’” (qtd. in Wager 6).

In this section, rather than directly applying specific film theories to the plays, critics on the film adaptation of the Lulu plays by Pabst will be partly looked at. Filmed in the late 1920s, its social background and that of the play written are different; yet its feminist critique, such as Doane’s “The Erotic Barter: Pandora’s Box,” can present us with some valuable insights. Reading the play as “structured by an optics of eroticism based on a network of gazes which signal the momentous events of the scenario and an acting mode which relies heavily on the expressivity of the eyes as a readable text” (147), she states how “the eye is not only the organ of desire, but that of performance and deception as well” (149). Also relevant is the “feminist theory’s emphasis upon sexuality as a site of oppression” that feminist film theory took as its stance. As Doane points out by quoting typical critics on the film, “Lulu acts as a narrative mechanism, the provoker of events” (153). “Lulu’s femininity is maintained and the signifier of

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27 This is also well applied to literature. William J. Doan in his accounting for Shaw’s The Doctor’s Dilemma, states as follows: “The eye, both as one’s seeing equipment and as a metaphor for knowledge and truth dominates the dramatic structure of this play” (106).
Geschwitz’s lesbianism is her masculinization” (153). Interesting is Elsaesser’s view on Jack the Ripper “as Alwa’s double and exemplification of his violent underside” (qtd. in Doane 155): Doane interprets it as a revised form of the oedipal fantasy.

Doane links Dr. Schön with the “castrating look of the Father” and the State Prosecutor with “the Law,” and Alwa with “the terrified observer.” “Geschwitz is given eyes that are associated with jealousy,” while “Jack the Ripper has a psychotic gaze.” And Lulu, among these various people, “gives her look freely’ (149). Here it is also implied that Lulu has certain agency in that she is the one who “gives” rather than merely being an object of desires.

**A New Lens – Film Noir**

All these characteristics are represented by the famous female figure of film noir, the femme fatale. Hales also noted in her essay “Woman as Sexual Criminal,” that the femme fatale should be read as “a signifier for the fear of women’s liberation” (qtd. in Wager xiv). Similarly, Doane stated that “the femme fatale is a clear indication of the extent of the fears and anxieties prompted by shifts in the understanding of sexual difference in the late nineteenth century” (1). “The femme fatale is situated as evil and is frequently punished or killed” (2), and threatens male dominance in the society. The above interpretations, then, are parts of efforts to see the character Lulu from a feminist or female point of view, more positively than negatively. In this sense of positive and negative, it is not social morals nor customs that are applied; it is rather a matter of seeing women, through the representation of the female character, as respectable, active human beings, and finding out or pointing out whether they are really represented as such. Studies have shown that this was not the case; Wedekind turned into a misogynist from having been a social liberator; his whole plays have come under a new scrutiny with a more critical and harsh lens.

In terms of multiplicity, these literary trends and efforts could be perceived as contributing to the possibilities of understanding the character Lulu. However, in
addition to looking at her from a sheer social and political background as Florack and Boa did, or from literary criticisms, the approach to interpreting her as a representative of the human being in fin-de-siecle also enriches the interpretations.

IV. Literature and Literary Criticism

The reception history of the 1980s and onward shows a close relationship of literature with literary criticism. These vast amounts of interpretations on the Lulu plays, when it is taken into account that the plays have been under scrutiny of practitioners and scholars fairly recently, again show us the existence of multiple aspects of the plays.

Male vs Female Point of View

The multifarious interpretations also show abundant ways of putting the plays on the stage. Which of the ways is the more correct reading the Lulu plays? The earlier interpretations drew readers and audiences’ attention to the plays, credited the playwright for his brave, audacious, and satiric attack on the decayed society, and pointed out preceding elements of expressionistic drama in technicalities and themes. With the advance of feminist reading, both the plays and the playwright have been analyzed under a new lens; both of the interpretations of Lulu as a mere reflection of men’s desire and as a destructive force on men, and that Wedekind was indeed a social liberator, presenting the figure Lulu as a sexual force of nature to restore original state of mankind, have been critiqued as male-oriented points of view. What contemporary feminist scholars have attempted to do is to critique existing scholarly assessments of Wedekind and his plays, especially the Lulu plays, to point out the narrowness of these arguments.

‘Revisiting28’ Canonic Literatures

28 As Gail Finney gives it as an example of taking a woman’s perspective on the literature in her Introduction, Fetterely’s Resisting Reader gave me inspiration and courage to hold to my earliest ideas on Lulu by breaking myself from the preexistent readings of Lulu and develop my arguments.
Feminist reading in a broad sense is seen as resistant reading; any attempt to approach existing literature with a vastly different stance will be counted as such. This has taken form not only in erasing the dishonor of negative ideas of Lulu and restoring her agency and autonomy, but also in focusing on the minor character, the Countess Geschwitz, who is accounted as the first lesbian woman depicted in European drama. Read as ‘shadow of Lulu’ by the Lesbian scholar Lynda Hart, the relatively lacking reference to the figure seems to be compensated. As a response to these feminist readings, male scholars have taken sides with the counterattacking argument that the literature immediately after the wars depicted the crisis of men in society, characterized by the male figures in literature. Or, additional interpretations of Jack the Ripper, not necessarily read with a feminist point of view, offer us another new look on the literary practice. However, scholars have not speculated on the operational power of gaze and discipline that Wedekind lets affect Lulu. The approach to the Lulu plays should take a broader scope, or at least build upon the new interpretations.

Scholars asserted that it was now more than difficult to interpret Lulu in any way other than the previously male-centered theories and thought systems regarding her. This is why a broader scope of thought is needed to interpret Lulu; one that at least has space for her to exist. As we have seen in the previous chapters, binary oppositions such as culture (or civilization)/nature, reason/instinct, reality/pleasure have assigned women to the latter of these choices, which Lulu does not accept. She is also closer to the opposing notions of modernity’s integrity, and the only (Oneness), such as fragmentation, diversity, and multiplicity. Yet, due to the long education offered by the representative of the first part of the pairs, Dr. Schön, she comes to equally harshly judging the rational world. As a result, all the male characters do not recognize her true nature. They fail in their attempt and pursuit of chasing her because she does not have a fixed identity, but is constantly changing (being in flux), making all meanings slide down, rendering all the meanings all the more slippery as in the postmodern era.
Feminist scholars attributed the difficulty of interpreting Lulu to her androgy and her origin myths of Pandora. Both of them present “ambiguity”\textsuperscript{29} as the sole and main cause. Whereas earlier scholars also noted these two aspects and merely stated them in order to say that Lulu is deceptive, and therefore evil, feminists speculated on them as the very nature of Lulu, and women.

**Chapter Summary**

Together with the earlier receptions, these recent interpretations of Wedekind’s Lulu plays present us with interesting trends. The figure Lulu has become more important than the playwright himself. The playwright comes to the discussion for the purpose of rebutting his playwriting, as his other less well-known plays are taken into consideration. In a sense, the present reception of the Lulu plays seems to be that of a continuous battle between a fixed, established territory and a fluid, ever changing territory. Even though they are conflicting arguments, at times they overlap and their boundaries are difficult to be detected.

Yet these numerous recent interpretations focus too much on debating whether the representation of Lulu by Wedekind is that of a woman-supporter or a woman-hater. Many obstinately argue the possibility of the plays being written based on a real historical and social setting, and support authoritative psychoanalysis as either a valid or invalid tool for interpreting the plays, etc. Also, those who tried to approach the plays in social and political settings tended to achieve more or less Marxist criticism. Here lies the value of approaching the Lulu plays in terms of the power functioning within the texts, staying away from Marxist points of view. Power relations and their application, most frequently are shown by the projection of desire and the gaze, as will be elucidated in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{29} Finney says that “male dramatists were often deeply ambivalent toward women and the versions of womanhood they created for the theater are correspondingly ambiguous” (13).
Chapter Three
Lulu in a Network of Gaze and Power

In the previous two chapters, we have explored the scholarly receptions of the Lulu plays and related assessments of the playwright, Wedekind. Through this, we saw how Wedekind uses the device of the character, “Lulu,” in his creation of a proto-expressionist play. In his forward strategy, the construction of the plots surrounding the female protagonist Lulu, he not only appropriates her allegoric features to attack the nineteenth-century German bourgeois, but also presents the typical thought systems, which highlights men’s customary ideas or perceptions of women.

Thus, Wedekind’s playwriting shows both his conscious and unconscious ideas about men and women, deeply influenced by the social notions of his time. The Lulu plays, with their very modern portrayal of these traits, have come to be greatly valued. Written over a period of nine years before coming up with the final version of the present plays, the Lulu plays here show important aspects of troubled people in the modern era. The force lying behind the world is a system of power and a network of gaze. The power is organized by an oppositional logic system, which includes men/women, culture/nature, order/chaos, good/evil, etc., to name a few. In addition to these, the society during this time period shows oppositional pairs of father (old generation)/son (new generation), straight/homosexual, high class/low class, and Western/Eastern.

However, what we will see at the end is not a mere reflection of modernity conveyed by the Lulu plays. Rather, it brings us further to witness certain postmodern traits of the plays. The whole effort of identifying Lulu and the plays, done by scholars

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30 The oppositional ideas between the old society and the new society, represented by father and son, were precisely the major theme of German expressionist drama, as exemplified by Georg Kaiser and Walter Hasenclever.
with the medium of language, seems to be relatively unsuccessful in that Lulu, the signifier, and the scholars’ interpretations, the signified, are not in accordance. The multifarious interpretations of the plays and the character Lulu show a slippage of signs that freely unite.

I. Postmodern\textsuperscript{31} Approach to Lulu

In this chapter, in addition to the former scholarly works on who Lulu is and what she does in the plays, I will look at the power projections interwoven by the playwright into the plays. Examining the aspects and functions of Lulu as presented by Frank Wedekind in the two plays, \textit{ES} and \textit{PB}, will shed light on the so-far ceaselessly approached figure, Lulu, as well as other characters in the Lulu plays. The representational aspects of Lulu as a disciplined subject can be best explained by Michel Foucault’s idea of Panopticon.

\textbf{Michel Foucault}

Foucault saw power to be operational and a relationship. He also read the modern subject as a product of modern discourse and the function of power it serves. not only this but also Jacques Lacan and Laura Mulvey’s gaze theories will be briefly mentioned. Psychoanalytic and film theories are in close relationship with Foucault’s inspecting gaze or gaze in general. The difference would be, whereas ‘overseeing,’ used for keeping order, discipline, and upbringing, is an active projection of sight/gaze, the projection of desire can be seen as an individualistic action and of furtive quality. In the Lulu plays, the role of gaze is dominant amongst all. These theories take into consideration not only the gazes projected by the characters, but also underlying desires

\textsuperscript{31} “Postmodernism […] denies the possibility of returning to, recapturing, or even representing the origin, source, or any deeper reality behind phenomena, and casts doubt on or even denies its existence. In a sense, postmodernism is intentionally superficial, not through eschewing rigorous analysis, but by regarding the surface of things, the phenomena, as not requiring a reference to anything deeper or more fundamental” (15).
that explicitly or implicitly demand or expect actions from Lulu. Also of importance is the internalizing power of surveillance that shapes Lulu in favor of the male characters.

Before we move into exploring the aspects of power and gaze in the Lulu plays, I would like to repeat what the feminist readings’ points of view have affected on reading the Lulu plays or Wedekind’s other plays.

**Psychoanalytic Theories**

As we have seen in the previous chapters, the feminist interpretations of the Lulu plays have concentrated on ‘revisiting’ or rereading the already-authoritative plays\(^3\). Their effective tool was, at the front, psychoanalysis. Lacanian theories, the most popular ones, marked the change from archetypical psychoanalysis to theories of desire. In short, the ambivalent and multiple meanings of Lulu ceased to be read as a fixed identity, such as Earth Mother, Eve, or Pandora, and resumed life in the psychology of language, where the meaning is in flux. Likewise, the feminist film theorists, who also use psychoanalysis as their most effective tool, already noted that “in patriarchal culture (the image of femininity) is a multipurpose signifier” (*Sexuality and Space* 57). Lacanian notions of *mirror stages, jouissance, festiche, the name of father, and the phallus*, contributed to the interpretation of the abstract form of desire in the notion of language. Whereas scholars such as Boa still read Lulu and the Lulu plays in Freudian terms, those who adapted Lacanian theory discarded the former readings, which centered on the oedipal desire.

But some other feminist scholars have claimed that women cannot exist in Freudian nor Lacanian psychoanalyses, which still have the binary oppositional thought system. This is just like Helene Cixous and Julia Kristeva, who asserted that women have some traits that cannot be discerned nor explained by the male dominant thought system, order, and theories. This goes further in the ‘Otherness’ issue, which

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\(^3\) For the explanations on the practice of ‘revisiting the canon,’ see Steadman 13.
claims that we cannot understand ‘the Other’ by the male-centered thought system, but females can bring them into our arms. In a word, these feminist scholars saved women from male-dominant thought systems, eventually encouraging voiceless beings to have their voices. Thereby women can be present and achieve their own subjectivity, rather than withdraw to the realm to which this male-centered psychoanalysis confines them. Also notable is the fact that both earlier and recent scholars referred to Lulu’s ambiguity. Panopticon, Discipline, Tragic Victim, Postmodernity

In spite of the refusal of some feminists, the Lacanian ideas contribute to reading the power relationship as the definition of desire and gaze. I see it to be related with Foucault’s definitions of power/knowledge and Panopticon, and thereby offer the possibility of analyzing the representational and functional aspects of the characters and the plays. Foucault emphasized the function of power in light of the course of history rather than in its mere definition. In this paper, such function of power and gaze on the character Lulu is examined. In addition to this, I refer to Raymond Williams’ ideas of “tragic victim” in the modern society to highlight Lulu’s alienation.

The aspects of Lulu’s alienation have been sometimes referred to by the early and later scholars. Gittleman noted her alienation in society (73). Bond, in his foreword to Lulu: A Monster Tragedy, also mentioned her being alienated in the capitalist society. Raymond Williams’ Modern Tragedy, in which he gives us an insight on nineteenth century European drama, is also relevant. He states how human beings came to deny tragedy, “the conflict between an individual and forces that destroy him” over the process of time [history of time]” (87). In Part II, Williams draws conclusions on modern tragic literature, “the time of man his own victim” (100). “The hero, if not the desire

33 Being the function of a disciplined society, it aims at increasing the efficiency. The Foucault Reader. “[…] the disciplines characterize, classify, specialize; they distribute along a scale, around a norm, hierarchize individuals in relation to one another and, if necessary, disqualify and invalidate” (212).

34 “The exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation.” Foucault, Discipline 170.
itself, is broken” (100) and “desires, consistently, betrays desire. The most active search to fulfil the self leads away from the persons in whom fulfillment is desired” (102). However, Foucault’s arguments on analyzing the modern society enable us to avoid Marxist interpretation. In the same way, his arguments have given us great insight and contemplation into the power of the modern world, equally serving as an effective tool for examining Lulu, born on the eve of the modern era. Lastly, the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari and Baudrillard,\textsuperscript{35} philosophers in this very postmodern era, will be referred to at the end in order to look at the figure Lulu with a broader scope of view\textsuperscript{36}. These will be the background notions used in approaching the figure Lulu, who was first created by Wedekind in 1892.

\textbf{II. The Lulu Plays}

Written in the nineteenth century, the Lulu plays contain the Foucaultian mechanism of social disciplines. Whereas his sexual discourse that the sexuality in that era was under repression especially by hospitals and medical practitioners is not as much apparent, the power relations, surveillance, and Panopticon are indeed prevailing throughout the plays.

\textbf{The Circus In and Outside of the Tent}

The foremost device of telling the function of power/knowledge and gaze in the Lulu plays is the setting of the place by the playwright. First of all, Wedekind introduces a circus (tent) in his later added prologue in 1898, and starts the play with a line of the animal tamer’s “[…] Step right inside to look around the zoo / With burning

\textsuperscript{35} As we’ve read in Chapter 1 and 2, numerous contrasting and contradicting meanings of Lulu almost appear as if there are no fixed meanings or interpretations. Not only does that the character Lulu seems to be reborn and reborn by scholars (and possibly by theatre practitioners), but also it almost shows there’s no origin or historicity in her figure. This links with the Baudrillard’s ideas of simulation and “floating signifier.”

\textsuperscript{36} Baudrillard notes in his “Symbolic Exchange and Death,” “in its infinite reproduction, the system puts an end to the myth of its origin and to all the referential values it has itself secreted in the course of its process” (451).
pleasure, icy shudders too, / Here and there where the soulless brute creations play” (9). He indicates that the whole stage is an object of gaze. So, as we’ve seen in the previous receptions of the plays in Chapter 1, the focus lies on showing the battle between human being and beast, and on introducing tigers, bears, monkeys, camels, and snakes in relation to specific characters in the plays. In this Chapter, I would rather concentrate on Wedekind’s playwriting and presentation of each character as an object of meticulous inspection and continuous pleasure. Act 1 of ES thus starts with the following: called upon by “Hey, August, bring our snake this way!,” a “navy with a big stomach” carries “the actress of Lulu in a Pierrot costume” in his arms, who comes out of the tent, then takes her back after the introduction of the animal tamer (I.10). When he takes Lulu back into the tent, the stage setting changes to Schwarz’s atelier.

**Places of Gaze**

As we see in the plays, Wedekind changes the places of the plays according to the size and power of gaze and inspection. Starting from Schwarz’s atelier, they move on to a dressing room of a theatre, a magnificent room in German Renaissance style, where ES takes place. PB starts in this same scene, moving toward a drawing room in France, and to an attic room in London in the last Act, without any windows. The setting for Act 1 is a spacious atelier, which is a closed private space. Here, Lulu is an object to be drawn into a painting, who is instructed and together with the painting is observed, and commented upon. In a word, this place is where the characters can freely watch her, observe her, and judge her. Here, what we see is Lulu under the surveillance of Dr. Goll. Having met her at a ball through the introduction by Dr. Schön, Dr. Goll might well be happy to see Dr. Schön again. However, he shows a rather unwelcoming stance towards Dr. Schön, when he first finds Dr. Schön in the atelier. He is disturbed to have somebody else’s gaze upon Lulu; he is even cautious of the painter being drawn to Lulu. As if he could read Dr. Goll’s mind, Dr. Schön tells the painter to treat Lulu as a still-life (I.2.21).
Therefore, the conflict arises in that Dr. Goll is much too conscious of allowing Lulu to be under the gaze of people other than himself. He is already too anxious already when he was asked to attend Alwa’s rehearsal that moment. Dr. Schön, who is very well aware of this, soothes down Dr. Goll by saying the painting will be of no harm. However, the still-worried Dr. Goll returns to the atelier earlier than the others, and has a stroke seeing the atelier door closed. He bangs on the door madly, so that he breaks it down open, then shows his “bloodshot eyes” (30). His regret and rage of not having kept Lulu under perfect surveillance makes his eyes open even when he is dead. Lulu, who very is well aware of his incessant gaze during the married life, wants to finally cut it from her; “He’s looking at my feet and watching every step I take. He doesn’t take his eyes off me” (I.7.31). Lulu asks Schwarz to close Dr. Goll’s eyes, and again refers to Dr. Goll watching at her (33).

This function of the atelier as a closed private place is paralleled in IV.6.73 through the dialogue between Alwa and Escerny. Similarly to Dr. Schön and Dr. Goll, these two young men gloat and comment on Lulu, each projecting their expectation and tastes on women. The absence of the painter is filled by the audience in the theatre. Thus the boundary between the audience within the plays, the audience at the theatre when the Lulu plays are actually performed (a play performance and the reality) gets torn down, thereby letting them mix together. In this scene, Alwa and Escerny argue about which color complements Lulu better, and why.

ALWA. I think the white suits her better than the pink.
ESCOERNY. I don’t.
ALWA. The white tulle is more expressive of the child in her.
ESCOERNY. The pink tulle is more expressive of the woman in her! (IV.6.73)

Wedekind lets each of them express what they find in their thoughts; each projects his ideal image of Lulu, or his ideal image of women, on her. Wedekind not only lets them each present different tastes of men toward women, but also pulling out or creating an
image of Lulu, where Alwa wants to see “the child” and Escerny “the woman” in Lulu. Wedekind directs the audience’s gaze toward Lulu by making each male character talk about her, though she is not yet on the stage. By increasing curiosity to a higher degree, and thereby the anticipation of the audience about the unseen character Lulu, Wedekind sets the play within the seemingly conventional five-structure play. However, in every act there seems to be climax evolving around Lulu, whereby Wedekind presents her as a misinterpreted creature. As it will be more clearly shown later, all the comments or ideas the characters impose on Lulu are vain efforts; Lulu is out of common people’s realm. Also, the stage direction of moving to various countries and places is similar to freely moving around in the fantasy world of circus. Despite the differences of physical places, the gaze by the characters on Lulu constantly prevails; it also demands of the readers and audience to watch her with whatever measure we might have on women/Lulu.

In the Lulu plays, the place and realm/boundary are far from realistic. This is just as unrealistic as the gaze of the characters that contains fantasy, expectations, and desire. As Lulu made her first appearance on the stage by her portrait – prior to the addition of the prologue with animal tamer--, she indeed is in a realm that gets illuminated whenever gaze is present. This gaze, like Panopticon, comes from everyone as they observe her continually. Yet, this gaze contradicts Lulu’s nature in that it is based on the Victorian ideas of women. Written in an era when women were still not recognized as full individuals, the typical patriarchal men inevitably fail to accomplish a complete understanding of Lulu. This, as a result, alienates Lulu.

**The Watching Device**

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37 The presence of many climaxes is characteristic of feminist dramas, which contrast to the conventional five acts structure. Feminists argue that this different structure symbolizes different phase and occurrence of sexual orgasm of men and women.

38 For the life and status of women in Victorian era Europe, see History of Women.
The exercise of gaze and surveillance is effectively and directly stated by the props in the plays. The representative prop is, firstly, the portrayal of Lulu shown to the audience, the portrait of her in a Pierrot costume. The portrait is present on the stage throughout the plays, except in two scenes: once in the very beginning of PB, and one at the very end of it—though in both cases the picture will be brought to the stage eventually. So, when Lulu is physically absent, the portrait is available to receive gaze from whoever looks upon it. Boa states the function of the portrait as following:

The portrait testifies through its vicissitudes to the way in which art can create and transmit ways of seeing and of appearing, the loving and beautiful as well as the destructive and ugly. [...] the transforming erotic imagination, albeit the male erotic imagination working on the female object. (Sexual Circus 74)

The portrait is also an important object that causes Lulu’s presence to be distanced from the reader, audience, and the characters in the plays. Rather than seeing Lulu herself, we are led to watch her reflection. By the portrait, Wedekind shows that Lulu is being objectified. As her painting is contained in a “golden frame” so is Lulu confined in area to be looked at, in as florid costumes as the golden picture frame. In a word, her fate is to be looked at through the portrait, be commented on, and be passed on to different hands.

The idea of control is also represented by the use of tall mirrors. A mirror is a device that has multiple functions. Inside the plays, a network of gaze can be produced. When several nets of power and gaze are projected towards the mirrors, the mirrors reflect a double image of the original subject. Mirrors also intermediate performance with reality; they reflect the reality, they reflect me and me, me and you, me and other, whereby fantasy can be developed. Lastly, the multiple visions given out by the mirrors blur those boundaries mentioned above. In all the scenes in Acts 2 and 3, there are large mirrors on the stage. In Act 2, a big mirror is on the left of a very elegant living room, and in Act 3, there is also a big mirror on the right front side, depicting a theatre
dressing room. Whereas Lulu is sitting toward the audience in Act 1, while letting the audience watch her (via) the comments given by Dr. Schön, Dr. Goll, and Schwarz, her reflection to the mirrors, a more material image of Lulu is delivered to us in the two later acts. In the beginning of Act 2, Wedekind uses the mirrors to let Lulu look into herself, which tells that she cares about her own appearance. Thus, Lulu already shows at this point what the effects of Foucaultian power theory shows; that the object of surveillance and gaze watches and observes by itself, by internalizing such discipline already at this point.\(^{39}\)

And the audience also observes Lulu looking at herself, thereby creating a double vision. In a sense, our contact with the character Lulu becomes more distant, meaning that Lulu is getting further away from us. That it gets more complex to discern her origins and the fact that she appears to be multiple as argued by Littau in the previous chapter, are also characteristically witnessed by the postmodernists. Conceived in the modern era, and reconstructed in the later modern era, the Lulu plays unconsciously contain the evolving notions and ideas about the world spread over both eras.

**The Arena for Projecting Gaze**

Throughout the Lulu plays, visual actions such as seeing, watching, witnessing, and peeping constantly develop the plot. One character’s perceived image of another is actively presented: Dr. Goll and Dr. Schön commenting on Lulu’s painting and Lulu’s pose as a model, Escerny’s proclamation of his love toward illusion of Lulu, people’s comments on Lulu’s portrait. The projection and intersection of gazes become the most complex netting while simultaneously numerous characters are present on the stage, ignorant of the fact that they are being watched: Geschwitz watching Lulu and others, Dr. Schön spying on Lulu and his son Alwa, Rodrigo and Hugenberg peeping at Lulu.

\(^{39}\) For the internalizing discipline and “normalization,” see Foucault.
and Dr. Schön, etc. In Act 3, Scene 4, Wedekind lets Prince Esceny openly declare to Lulu his imagined figure of her:

ESCERNY. For ten evenings I have studied the life of your soul as it is expressed in your dancing, until today, when you came on as a flower-girl. I was able to complete my picture. Yours is a generous nature, unselfish. You cannot bear to see anyone suffer. You are the embodiment of mortal happiness. As a wife you would make a man supremely happy...Your being is all candour...you would make a poor actress.... (III.4.72)

Here, what may sound melodramatic at first soon ceases to be so, since the audience knows Esceny is not observing Lulu objectively. The image of Lulu that was created, developed, and colored by other characters prevails in the play at this point.

**Exercising Authority on Minorities**

In various senses, Wedekind designs Lulu in a way to fully function as an object of surveillance and gaze. He sets her as an orphan girl, so that Foucault’s observations of surveillance at an orphanage, asylum, and military schools, seem to provide a tool for treating her as well. Wedekind deprives Lulu of heritage by not giving her biological parents, or any reference of family roots. While he does give information about Lulu’s earlier childhood and does this for no other character than Alwa Schön, Lulu is the only one to whom he does not give a family name. By setting Lulu as an orphan, Wedekind endows other characters in the play with an effective setting for manipulating or making her docile. Wedekind has Dr. Schön bring the then-twelve-year-old Lulu home when he catches her stealing his watch, and entrust Lulu to a woman to teach her. This woman, who Lulu calls ‘an aunt,’ is a surrogate mother for Dr. Schön to keep an eye on Lulu and to bring about whatever results he expects from her. In a word, the setting for Lulu instantly positions her into a place to be watched and observed.
Wedekind’s setting Lulu as an object of gaze is most apparently shown by his addition of the prologue to ES⁴⁰. The prologue takes on the shape of circus, a set public arena to present objects for the sole purpose of letting them be watched. That what we will be watching is a product of training is told by the presence of the animal tamer. With the later addition of this prologue, Wedekind presented not only Lulu as a rightful object to be looked at and commented on, but also the whole plays as a circus, where lights and sounds together with the spectacle create a journey to fantasy. What’s more, the stage setting indicating ‘a tent’ is only partially shown to the audience; what actually lies behind the curtain, therefore, is not definite.

**The Authority**

Wedekind lets Dr. Schön exercise a far more influential power on Lulu than other male characters by letting him educate and train Lulu with abundant prizes. In a word, that Lulu is so malleable to him is the outcome of his education with other compensations; it is because of Dr. Schön’s functions Wedekind has attributed to him, rather than by his physical age. Found on the street by Dr. Schön at the age of twelve, Lulu was given proper shelter, food, clothes, and various lessons, which are nothing compared to the treatment by Schigolch. As mentioned by Foucault, any institution would have compensating activities or praises in order to bring the utmost outcome, rather than only for preventing or punishing faults. Here, Dr. Schön is the one—almost the very first one since she began to recognize her surroundings—who is there to protect her, nourish her, and present the possibility of building an emotional bond. Of course, as Foucault observed by the disciplinary life styles of schools and prisons, this contains both carrots and whip. Though it is not clear whether or not Dr. Schön intended to raise up Lulu a mistress, it is probable that he must have felt compassionate when he saw the barefooted Lulu about to steal his watch. He gets angry to know Lulu

⁴⁰ For the aesthetic and strategic meanings of the prologues to ES and PB, see Kuhn, 82-91. The author also explores a great deal on the elements of grotesque and absurdity in this book.
has let Schigolch in the house, and tells her that he would not let Schigolch into the house if he were Lulu’s husband. Still, Dr. Schön’s care and interest only goes so far; he is the superior one, in a differentiated sphere from Lulu. To him, Lulu is an object for him to check his superiority; he satisfies himself by seeing the result of his upbringing of her. Therefore, it would greatly disturb him if Lulu demands more than her deserving portion, or if he is not acknowledged by others for what he has done.

A Careful Design

In a way, Wedekind lets Dr. Schön not only give shelter, food, and education, but also lets him design her life. This is discovered when he makes Dr. Schön take Lulu to the theatre, in order for someone rich to see her and take her as a mistress. The place where Lulu has interactions with people is at the theatre, and though this is a place where people go to see a play, it is a strategic place for Dr. Schön to expose Lulu to other people’s gaze. Like this, Dr. Schön weaves intricate routines for Lulu to follow, as reminiscent of the boarding schools, convents, and prisons of Foucault. According to Foucault, “the chief function of the disciplinary power is to ‘train’” (The Foucault Reader 188). Also when Dr. Schön uses a whip on Lulu when flirting with her, we can assume that he had a kind of routine. Furthermore, Wedekind lets Dr. Schön even design the marriage of Lulu with Dr. Goll and Schwarz. In a sense, Dr. Schön’s initial encounter with Lulu and his providence on her should have made her feel that he cared about her. This nonetheless makes Lulu acquiescent to Dr. Schön’s demand.

Wedekind designs Lulu through the gaze of other people, along with their fantasies and expectations. The first two marital lives of Lulu conveniently tell the aspects of the results. Wedekind lets Dr. Goll make Lulu dance to his violin and use a whip for flirting, Dr. Goll treating her as a private property and toy. In Act 1, Scene 1,

\[41\] Nancy Chodorow’s attachment theory tells that all children develop a “relational identity” with the first parent. Especially girls show a strong desire for interpersonal bonds with their first parental figure(s). See Feminism.
where Dr. Goll brings Lulu to Schwarz’s atelier to have her portrait drawn, the gaze and comments of people on Lulu’s shape guide the audience to a picture of Lulu. The atelier is a private and public place where a thorough gazing on objects is commonly allowed. Here, the characters project their gaze freely on the object, Lulu, without any restraint. Yet, Dr. Goll, who rather wants to have Lulu in as private a setting as possible, never taking her to a ball or to the hospital (his workplace), gets uncomfortable when he accidentally comes across Dr. Schön in the atelier. He is even uncomfortable with the painter, Schwarz, and hesitant to leave Lulu alone with him. Dr. Schön, on the other hand, who already is an expert in objectifying Lulu through his year-long relationship with her, directs Schwarz to “treat her as a still-life” (I.2.21). Schwarz, however, who already had shown signs of his attraction to Lulu in his idealistic description of Lulu to Dr. Schön, falls into the trap of his own idealism and desire. He becomes instantly ‘blind’ toward Lulu, in the sense that his perceptions of Lulu are formed this very moment. This continues throughout his marital life with Lulu, letting him swim in his imagined fantasies. In her marriage with Schwarz, Lulu is “Eve,” to which name she automatically puts on a smile when called upon (II.1.37). No matter what her present mood is, she acts according to the expectation of her husband: Eve with an innocent smile. Though the aspects of confrontation of each man are not obvious, the projection of gaze and desire for Lulu increasingly become entangled, ultimately convoluting any new or objective approaches to understanding Lulu.

As the outcome of Dr. Schön’s exercise of power, Lulu reaches the point of internalizing the discipline. She has internalized Foucault’s inspecting gaze.

**Internalizing Disciplines**

Wedekind lets us see specific moments of Lulu exercising or practicing surveillance by herself. She has numerous clothes to wear, perfumes to spray, and she practices putting on a smile as can be inferred in Act 2. In ES, she is the one who almost always senses someone’s presence outside the door. She also looks to her environment
quite carefully, oftentimes being conscious of other people. As it will be stated much later, she utters that people do not know what other people think, which is not a mere exclamation out of her childlike traits, but one out of life experience. When she talks to Alwa about their past time, she mentions how Alwa turned icily cold towards her after he found out that his father slept with her. Also, at the theatre, when Dr. Schön finally attends Lulu’s show but accompanies his fiancée, Lulu faints during the performance. She does not allow herself to be watched more by her unbeatable rival, Adelaide. That Lulu has observed Adelaide over the years is shown in her own words: “The child is too unspoilt for you. The child has been much too carefully brought up” (II.3.49).

Another occasion is in the last act of PB, when the Countess Geschwitz visits Lulu, Alwa, and Schigolch’s house.

LULU. (screams) And you’ve brought it here, you monster? – Take that picture out of my sight! Throw it out of the window!

ALWA. (as if suddenly rejuvenated, greatly pleased) But why on earth? In the face of that portrait I regain my self-respect. It makes my destiny comprehensible. (III.164)

Here, Lulu shouts at the Countess who has brought her the picture we’ve seen from the very first scene of ES. Her reaction is greatly in contrast to that of in Act 1, PB, when she identifies the picture as herself: “One feels frightened when one hasn’t seen oneself for months” (124). What Lulu calls ‘herself’ and Alwa calls ‘vanity’ in the beginning of the Act 1 of PB becomes an object that infuriates Lulu and greatly pleases Alwa. Lulu, who was calling for the portrait right after coming out of the prison, due to her longing and need for a strong gaze and reflection that makes her feel alive, is useless in the last Act, since no other environment is supporting it. In order for the portrait to function properly, it needs supporting elements at the same time. Alwa, who is suffering from a disease, thereby having had no creative products lately, naturally welcomes the once-upon-a-time source of his inspirations, Lulu as a Muse. Seeing Lulu in her prime time in
the picture gives him memories of his prime time, whereby he can soothe his present state.

Another example of Lulu’s self-exercising of internalized discipline can be seen whenever Lulu is in front of mirror, or in her mentioning about her clothes and silk-like skin. Lulu, on her own, tries to keep herself up with what is considered to be in fashion or in beauty, as she might have learned from her ‘aunt’ and/or picked up during her stay in Paris, by observing women at balls, etc. However, amongst all, the declaration of belonging is the most decisive evidence:

LULU. (in a decided tone) If I belong to anyone in the world, I belong to you.

Without you I should be—I wouldn’t care to say where. You took me by the hand, gave me food and clothing when I tried to steal your watch. Do you think I can forget a thing like that? [...] (II.3.49 emphasis added)

All in all, unlike the outcome of power seen by Foucault—to be productive and positive—the power projected in the Lulu plays has a detrimental effect on the projector. Lacanian Gaze and “the Father”

These differences require us to apply an additional frame for viewing the plays, such as Lacanian, which deals with desire and its function in a male-oriented view. The purpose of it is to find out any possible thought system applied by Wedekind. Wedekind puts Lulu under two father-like figures as a Lacanian idea of “Law.” Lulu’s childhood is taken care of by two elderly men, where Wedekind shows their past or present influence on Lulu by showing related past incidents. Schigolch, who Dr. Schön thinks as Lulu’s father, must have played the harmonica, as seen in his dialogue with Lulu in Act 2. In Pabst’s film, there is a long shot where Lulu dances crazily to Schigolch’s harmonica. The alternating shots between madly and free-spiritedly dancing Lulu and Schigolch, who satisfactorily gloats at the dancing Lulu while playing his instrument, almost create a tension.

42 For the Lacanian approach of the Lulu plays, see Bossinade.
Obviously, these two fatherly figures contrast with each other in their nature. Whereas Dr. Schön is representative of the customary world of reason, Schigolch comes out of baseness. This leads Lulu to retain contradictory characteristics as well, which is also an outcome of training.

**Pandora’s Box**

The censorship of the reduction and alteration of Jack the Ripper’s excision of Lulu’s genitalia in the last scene of the PB demonstrates society’s discomfort with the ideas represented by this graphic scene. Jack the Ripper’s last lines in The First Lulu, tells us that he is excited to have obtained one of such an amazing quality.

JACK. What luck! I could never have thought this up. Such a thing happens once in 200 years [...] When I’m dead, and my collections auctioned off, the London Hospital Museum will pay three hundred pounds for this night’s conquest! (He taps his pocket). Students and professors alike will find it an astonishment! – No towel in this place? They’re so damn poor!43

He is to sell it for quite a high price. Whereas Bond interpreted this as a reflection of capitalist society where money becomes overly powerful and human body gets price-value, I see it as referring to the outcome of making an individual “case,” one of the characteristics of disciplinary documentation as observed by Foucault.

The leap from ES to PB can be explained as the result of both Wedekind’s change in general point of view and also of the harsh censorship. The reduction of Jack the Ripper’s line should be seen as it was considered: as a detailed reflection of medicinal activities that his society would not let him announce. The case making is meant to be used in public, but it did not mean it could be publicized through the medium of art. We are also reported to that the Countess Geschwitz took a great risk of approaching Lulu as a nurse, got cholera, and succeeded in being in the same separate ward in the prison where Lulu is also confined. She lets Lulu escape in place of her and stays at

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43 For the comparison among various versions of this very last scene, see Littau 906.
prison instead. She has been using a great sum of money on the behalf of Lulu, to which Alwa remarks that no men would sacrifice themselves to that degree for love for a woman, thereby praising Geschwitz for valuable friendship.

When the play starts, with Dr. Schön dead; the world in PB is without the person dominantly in charge of Panopticon. Though the nature of Panopticon is to exercise its power from everywhere throughout society, the absence of Dr. Schön affects Lulu. When the play starts, she is again not on the stage, and it is reported that she is in jail. Here she is under the government of law, which took the place of Dr. Schön.

In PB, Wedekind has Lulu move out of Germany to broader fields, such as Paris and London. This extends the distance of gaze projection much further. It might appear that the power gaze emits decreases. However, he then develops more complicated situations around her, such as falsely swearing, getting involved in stocks, Alwa’s gambling, threatening from Casti-Piani, the more overt approach of Geschwitz, and Schigolch’s demand of money. So, the situations are more than direct surveillance and training that puts Lulu mostly as an object. Here, though she is threatened, highly demanded, she is given chances to think on her own and decide things. The film version of Pabst sets her to ask Schigolch to get rid of Casti-Piani, who constantly threatens to hand over Lulu to a brothel in Cairo. This adds cruelty to Lulu’s seemingly being “devoid of everything” (Panofsky 11) making the situation more sinister. Wedekind clearly delivers the change in Lulu’s physical, emotional, and financial states by means of her garments. In parallel to the stage setting, which is her house in each scene, her matching clothes show the aforementioned circumstances of Lulu. In a sense, what we see in PB is the real sense of Panopticism; that the surveillance and gaze now come from all directions, from all possible places. Even the brothel owner in Cairo has an eye on Lulu now, via her photo Casti-Piani had sent to him.

That she refuses going to the brothel in Cairo also provides a new point of view on Lulu. Though she was attributed the name of prostitute, she would not accept the
position of a comfortable and rich life at a brothel in Cairo. Whether or not she is a born prostitute or a passable commodity does not really tell about Lulu. She obviously has her agency and feelings, what male scholars and theatre practitioners were reluctant to acknowledge. Especially when the space gets enlarged, and the power of gaze decreases, she seems to have less tendency of being controlled by others’ expectations or plans. Yet, now it is to be witnessed in the Deleuzian desiring-machine.  

In the last act of PB, it may seem that the small attic room is a closed space, which does not allow gaze or surveillance anymore; Dr. Schön is dead, Geschwitz is out of sight, and Alwa is sick. In fact, Lulu does not have to care about those gazes and sights prevalent in ES and in the previous Acts in PB. However, soon it shows that it is not the case. Instead, Lulu prepares to go out onto the street, where gaze plays as important a role as in the other scenes. This is indicated by her putting on her lipstick, to get herself ready to be watched. Also, when she brings customers into her house, she goes directly into the room, thereby out of Alwa and Schigolch’s sight and the audience’s sight. Again, the staged scene does not allow gazing, in that the room is only lit by “a smoking paraffin lamp (155). Yet Wedekind does remind us that the plays are dealing with gaze, by having Alwa to go to the front of the room where the two people went, and to listen against the door. Lulu is still an object being watched and heard, even by a husband who cannot even provide food or clothes.

**Chapter Summary**

As seen in this chapter, Wedekind has Lulu come under influence of numerous characters throughout the plays. Lulu is almost becomes what other characters have molded her into by their personal desires and expectations, each projecting their own kind. Among all the characters, Dr. Schön is the most influential person who literally

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44 Deleuze and Guattari, “Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.” “There is no such thing as either man or nature now, only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machines together. Producting-machines, desiring-machines everywhere, schizophrenic machines, all of species life: the self and the non-self outside and inside no longer have any meanings whatsoever (402).
shapes, raises, feeds, teaches, and makes love to her. To Lulu, who has been saved from the street by Schigolch and later by Dr. Schön, Dr. Schön is more like a fatherly figure than Schigolch, who is known as her father; Dr. Schön has provided everything he could have given her, except one thing; respect for her as a human being. Lulu develops personal affection toward Dr. Schön, tries to establish a father-daughter relationship, which is trampled by his sleeping with her, which then makes her want to become his wife. Yet even this attempt is defeated at once, as Dr. Schön looks for a decent girl of a higher class to get married to. Besides, Dr. Schön arranges for Lulu to get married to a rich man like Dr. Goll, an old doctor who is a millionaire. This fat and old man makes Lulu dance to his music, even using a whip. The use of a whip by Dr. Schön is also mentioned by Lulu, along with the possibility of his hitting Lulu’s legs, which reminds us of the masochism in *Spring’s Awakening*. Schwarz, Alwa, Escerny, Rodrigo, and Countess Geschwitz utter their perceptions of Lulu. But until she genuinely gets insulted by Dr. Schön’s bringing his fiancée Adelaide to the theatre Lulu is performing, the only thing that matters to Lulu is to reach her goal of marrying Dr. Schön. After fainting from Dr. Schön’s ruthless behavior, Lulu finally blows out her hatred toward him, which is still the other side of love.

In *PB*, Wedekind shows only a trace of the Lulu in *ES*. He makes her a ruthless, heartless, egoistic, and cold-hearted woman, who schemes, lies, and even requests to kill Rodrigo who’s been threatening to hand her over to a brothel in Cairo. Though wealth and fame are promised by the life in Cairo, Lulu firmly refuses the offer, which tells us Lulu is not a blind pleasure-seeking girl. Thus, what Wedekind presents in the two plays shows that Lulu is not a femme fatale; she is not a female seducer or nymphomaniac; she is not an evil spirit that drives men to death. Rather, she is a device Wedekind used to present his views on where our society will be headed. Lulu is none of the literary or real figures given account so far, and at the same time she is all of them.
Lulu and the whole plays are, in a sense, almost becoming ‘hyperreal,’ created by ‘simulation’ that has nothing to do with this existing reality (Baudrillard).

In fact, within the texts, Lulu is a human who is deprived of her true human nature. There is not one single person to whom she can truly relate, not even one to whom she consciously attempted to become to be the closest person. Rather, her constant attempts in ES only get utterly denied and mocked at, until Dr. Schön gives in by himself and takes Lulu as his bride. Yet it was not out of love, trustworthy deed, or respect. He succumbed to his own conflicting desires, as his other actions were called by Alwa as “a retribution for the game you’ve been playing” (ES II.6.59). All in all, Lulu in ES is a psychologically and emotionally forlorn being, who has to face denial, abandonment (by the husband’s death), and exploitation. She has to stand alone in that world, consoling herself by means of dancing, if not by the pursuit of love of Dr. Schön that gives her a drive for life. The exercise of negative power of Foucault’s sense has driven her course of life. Seen from a distance, she is Raymond Williams’ tragic victim, in that she is living in a rationalistic yet chaotic world, caught in a passionate battle within herself and with the outer world.

On the other hand, the change of Lulu from the beginning of the formation of ideas in Wedekind’s head, through a marked evidence of change in PB, takes on close to the shape of the phenomenon described in Deleuze and Baudrillard’s writings. Though not futile, the exertion of digging out and tracing back to the origin and source of the playwright’s inspiration still seems useless. In this postmodern era, the alteration of the meanings or definitions formerly set is common. In other words, tracing the origin of Lulu is impossible, as Jacques Derrida’s argument shows the impossibility of tracing the origin of anyone; origin is an illusion in his view.

PB is where Wedekind has a basically changed Lulu perform negative deeds, and gradually drives her to a death sentence. It appears harsh and cruel, since Lulu is as good as dead in ES anyway. That Wedekind completed and ended PB with Lulu’s death
is a death sentence by him and the society. As Lynda Hart and some other scholars have noted, nineteenth century Germany had no place for an autonomous woman45. While Wedekind successfully depicts what he thought to be problematic in his country, mainly the hypocrisy in the patriarchal bourgeois society, he nonetheless reveals his or his contemporaries’ lack of understanding of women, their interpersonal value and needs. Furthermore, Lulu functions as a kind of litmus test that was predicting the future or outcome of modernist movements, that they will be dismantled if they go to too much extremity (Deleuze).

What’s more important is the overall impact the Lulu plays deliver to the readers of today. Even within the texts, compliments or curses on Lulu are heard. Prince Escerny’s praise on Lulu as “the embodiment of mortal happiness” (72) is very opposing to Dr. Schön’s “murderess” and “whore” (97-8). If we recall the feminist scholars’ arguments of male anxiety towards enigma-like women in general, or claim that such men feared autonomous women, the reason for these contradictory ideas becomes obvious. That Lulu is to be killed by a psychopath in the end signals the almost scary power of the patriarchal era, in that she is considered a criminal to be eliminated. Still, this end has been obvious in that the society in nineteenth era was so firm and unshakable that only this kind of flabbergasting figure should be devastating to the very core of society.

45 It is interesting to see two opposite sides of the same period of time: these feminists claimed that autonomous women had no place in the society, because men were afraid of those women take over men’s places; on the other hand, male scholars such as Gerald Izenberg, write that men themselves were facing crises especially during post-war era. See Izenberg 21-95.
Conclusion

Many female scholars have argued about whether or not Wedekind was a true supporter of female autonomy by using the representations of female characters in his various plays and with further support from his diary entries as well as his life as a whole. Thus, this proto-expressionist drama with a theme of sexuality and alienation interestingly has been argued against in the modern and postmodern era when psychoanalysis and feminism became popular. The Lulu plays indeed have interesting aspects in that they have characters from the so-called minority group, who are the ‘Other(s)’ in psychological and feminist terms. The plays include the majority and ruling class such as Dr. Schön, Dr. Goll, Prince Escerny and upper class people in the salon scene of PB, as well as the minorities such as the painter Schwarz, the student Hugemberg who gets put into prison, a pimp-like figure in Schigolch, and Ferdinand. Two of the characters, Countess Geschwitz and Casti-Piani are doubles. Geschwitz is a lesbian painter of high class; Casti-Piani has double jobs, as an employment agent and a police spy. Geschwitz (disturbs) Lulu, yet helps her escape from prison and from kidnapping by sacrificing herself; Casti-Piani is liked by Lulu but threatens and later gets determined to hand her over to a brothel agency for a great sum of money. The frequent and successive incidents of death in each act of ES are compactly placed at the end of PB. Lulu, our female protagonist, seems to take company with her in her journey to the other world.

In Chapter 3, after we looked at the historical development of the receptions of the Lulu plays in the two preceding chapters, we looked into the text itself to find the function of power usually delivered by the projection of gaze. Lulu, a creation of 1892, whom scholars have attempted to give life as early as that of Pandora myth and Genesis, has had a multitude of identities and attributes. As a figure of proto-expressionist drama, Lulu not only has the characteristics of a ‘tragic victim’ of the modern society
defined by Raymond Williams, but also exemplifies herself as an emblem of what becomes known in the postmodern era; a simulation. In the texts, we looked into the power projections and their effects on the projectors and the projected object, Lulu. Whereas Lulu’s alienation is the eventual outcome of her given environment in the plays, a contrary phenomenon is seen in her scholarly reception. As we have seen, myriad interpretations of Lulu’s representational meaning have been given ever since the plays were written. The numerous diverse interpretations (of Lulu) have almost become ‘floating signifiers,’ making it ever more difficult to find out who or what she represents. In a word, the figure Lulu itself has become Baudrillard’s ‘simulacrum.’

In the case of the Lulu plays, it is not surprising to witness post-modernity in a modern figure. Their playwright, Wedekind, was most of all an avant-garde in his era, discarding the then-popular naturalism and realism. One of the reasons that his Lulu plays were frequently rejected by the publishers and/or theatre companies was that the Lulu plays were anti-naturalistic. However, when compared to Wedekind’s original version of the plays, the present divided versions are radically reduced naturalistic plots and lines. For example, Lulu in The First Lulu overtly has affairs and commits adultery with Alwa and Rodrigo, where Alwa is depicted as a helpless, young, passionate lover out of control in front of Lulu. Her age is much younger; she was found by Dr. Schön when seven, instead of twelve in the Lulu plays. The language or dialogue technique, in which characters talk past each other, is not merely a proto-

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46 There are many interesting differences between the two versions of the play(s). For example, in the former one, Dr. Schönning, the former name of Dr. Schön, “took her [Lulu] away because the headmistress fell madly in love with her” (88). Dr. Schön’s fiancée is three years younger than Lulu, rather than barely one year younger as in the later versions, thereby cutting the possibility of creating Lulu’s jealousy because of age, or the rationales of blame on Dr. Schön for choosing the Baroness’ daughter over Lulu. Unlike in the ES, where Dr. Schön is known to have been engaged for two years before announcing his marriage, Dr. Schönning “sat her on my knee, as a little girl” (79), who is seventeen in the former version. The scheme and goal of Dr. Schönning’s pursuit of getting married to the Baroness’ daughter, is more explicitly depicted there, too.
expressionist practice. A dialogue where even two people cannot find the right recipient when saying something signals to us the absence of logic, signifier, or message.

The means that take the Lulu plays into the area of postmodernity are manifold: the meaningless language, the parallel talking to each other, the projection of desires and gaze, the takeover of center (landlord) and elite by the lower class (PB), and the incessant production of interpretations on the plays and characters. Though these are to be seen in modernity, (and the Lulu plays display modernist sentiments), the Lulu plays as a whole present the very characteristics of the postmodern. Within the plays, this is best implied in the end of PB, in the last scene where Lulu’s death is supposed to take place.

Unlike Dr. Goll, Dr. Schön, or Countess Geschwitz’s deaths, which occur on the stage, and Schwarz’, whose suicide is described by numerous people, none of the characters verify Lulu’s death at the end of the plays. Schigolch must have gone to the pub; Alwa is killed by one of the earlier customers of Lulu. Lulu’s presence turns into a visual device, when Jack the Ripper reappears alone washing his bloody hands. By this washing, she is gone in the reality in the play. Geschwitz’s last line at the very end of the plays shows she is in between the two different realms, though one is not visible: “(alone) Lulu! – My angel! – Let me see you once more! – I am near you- will stay near you- in eternity! (Her arms give way) Oh, God! – (She dies)” (III.175). In short, not a trace of Lulu is to be discerned or chased anymore. The stress, order, and repression by gaze and power, all that lead Lulu to an alienated being from herself, from others, and from the world, finally funnel into this attic room without windows of Act Three, into the closet where Jack and Lulu disappear. The horror, doubt, shock, and stupefaction call the attention of the scholars, readers, and theatre practitioners. It is indeed a mystery to see a strong female character’s cruel death, one who was notoriously known as a femme fatale.
However, this death can be seen as a liberation and a curing at last, that of the female protagonist and of the audience (Deleuze). The former, in the sense that Lulu won’t be subject to the power system of the society that has far bigger strength than herself; the latter, in the sense that the plays contribute to what Deleuze states as the core function of literature, to create the missing people, thereby creating the possibility of life for them, which eventually liberates the missing, minority people (Kafka). If we go back to the last scene of the Lulu plays, there is one more aspect not to be missed: that Lulu’s genitalia/womb is in Jack’s hands/pockets. And this part of her body will be carried to doctors or scientists’ hands, to be examined and studied for further work. Whether this should not be read as a liberation, due to the fact that she is again in hands of the authoritative, controlling part of the society, cannot be determined. Nobody knows whether or not Jack succeeds in handing it over to them (the needing parties), whether or not Jack survives, or whether or not he manages to sell it for a dear price.

It is true that the characters of the Lulu plays surely are characterized by a binary oppositional system, very possibly to satirize or attack certain members of Wedekind’s society. Nonetheless, the Lulu plays present us the underlying power relations and movements that go even beyond those created or given settings. They also draw our attention to numerous ‘Other(s)’ in and out of the plays. The figure Lulu tends to travel back and forth to different time and space through the medium of myth, literature, psychology, and picture, gaining meaning by differences. What is more important is how we feel about her and what we find out in the reading (Deleuze).

Thus Lulu’s ‘angst,’ evidenced by her occasional reference to death and her fear of death, finds no solution in the world of fiction; she earnestly hopes and strives to

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47 Also, “With Kafka we are no longer confronted by a “dialectic” or a “structural” correspondence between two kinds of “forms” – forms of content, on the one hand, and ready-made forms of expression, on the other—but, in the authors’ words, by a machine of expression that is capable of disorganizing its own forms, of disorganizing the forms of content, so as to free up an intense material of expression that is then made of pure content that can no longer be separated from its expression: [...]”. Bensmaïa xvii.
become the wife of Dr. Schön from the beginning to Act Three, the theatre scene of the ES. Yet Wedekind lets Dr. Schön harshly try to terminate Lulu’s hope of becoming his wife. Instead, she has to keep adapting herself to new kinds of power, whose very act calls upon the scholars’ attention to see her as a chameleon figure. Again, rather than an innocent looking, diabolic young woman destroying men who gets punished accordingly, Lulu should be seen as an emblem of our contemporary society. Though born in the nineteenth century, or possibly at the beginning of the world, she is contemporary in the sense that she carries the trace of human history. The effects of patriarchal society, projection of gaze, alienation, etc., are still affecting our society.

Feminists who tried to stay away from psychoanalysis, pointed out that women cannot exist in its inherently patriarchal thought system. They have drawn the conclusion that it is natural for Lulu and the Lulu plays to have ambivalence, pertaining to Lulu’s ambivalence as Pandora and as a woman. Though this attempt of looking at women as multifaceted and double might overcome the view of looking women as lacking, it still divides women and men into different groups.

However, Wedekind’s plays and their receptions present us more than the debatable issue of whether or not he was a supporter of women’s liberation. Rather, they show us our very history and the state of being. The plays show us how power projection is exercised, which parallels the birth of modern subjectivity in Foucaultian terms, how Lulu is being taught, observed, shaped, and molded by men’s power and gaze: the process of a disciplined society. Also it can be seen that the female protagonist is similar to the tragic victim of modern tragedy, as argued by Raymond Williams. In both views, the death is an inevitable outcome of the state of being, yet also a liberating moment. As we have seen, Lulu has indeed enjoyed being interpreted and reinterpreted continuously. Her very presence has shown us the birth of and move to postmodernity. The figure Lulu is traveling beyond the boundaries of realms set by society, indicating their coexistence as Deleuze argued.
Not only the character Lulu and the literary techniques given by Wedekind are crucial to our sense of postmodernity, or of our very present world. That the Lulu plays have survived all these years and been loved by people indicates that he picked up a central figure that penetrates our history of life; that of battle, love, artistic activity, delinquency, flirtation, fraud, murder, sacrifice, marriage, infidelity, etc., what may not be of importance, but of much interest. The real journey to past, present, and future that brings us to a liberating moment will happen when we actually see the plays. Solely reading the plays may present us numerous rooms with closed doors, but the real play on the stage may open doors to a more full understanding of the playwright’s intentions.

As we can see, Lulu does not have her place in the previous patriarchal society, where the binary oppositonal value system is manifest. In the Lulu plays, the Foucaultian notion of Panopticon is functioning throughout, showing how Lulu is trained, imagined, and expected in the modern era, full of power and gaze. On the other hand people of authority, such as Dr. Schön and Dr. Goll, die themselves. At least here the archetypal analysis that the old dies is still in effect. However, in nineteenth century Europe, where sights and images become more and more prevalent, the fate of such society is portrayed in Wedekind’s plays. The painter Schwarz, who may have succeeded in his artistic life – though we can suspect his success was also designed by Dr. Schön—met the horrible death by trying to fix Lulu, who is not fixable, to his ideas of her. Unlike the artistic painting, on which you can portray the object as you wish, Lulu cannot be dealt with in the same way. Like Lulu said, because he ‘loved’ her not ‘knowing’ her, that love could not be taken by her. As modernity contained destructiveness within itself and has to pass its place to postmodernity, Schwarz has to vanish from the plays.

From what we have seen, we can spot postmodern characteristics rising up from the Lulu plays to the surface. There is no more fixed thing, not an integrity, nor
wholeness, but it gets fragmented, diversified. Instead of one answer and one meaning of Lulu, there are several and multiple now.

In sum, the world in the Lulu plays, which has the traits of the nineteenth century bourgeois morality—hypocrisy, patriarchy, authority—is shaken by the appearance of Lulu. Though she is uninvited, she affects everyone. Every character attempts to project their own ideas on her, by which they try to make her their own, but Lulu does not allow it. The embodiment of postmodern, Lulu, evades incessantly all the efforts of people inside the dramatic world, as well as people outside it, namely the scholars, by only giving traces and simulacrumss

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48 See Baudrillard *Simulacra*. Through the practice of criticism, the character Lulu has become “a copy of copy”.

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Works Consulted


