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Foucauldian Theoretical Power Relations in Alban Berg's Operas

ABSTRACT: The narratives of Alban Berg's two operas, *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*, have often been analyzed for their socio-cultural symbolisms as reflections of the artistic movements in which they were composed. However, the operas also display a myriad of complex interpersonal relationships between the characters that bear explicit associations with themes of power. Michel Foucault famously devised several theories on power, through which this article aims to filter Berg's operatic narratives in order to draw unique parallels between social theory and artistic expression. What emerges is an interdisciplinary study that expands the understanding of these works through this unique juxtaposition, yielding new interpretations of these characters' interactions through the applicable theories of Foucault's force relations.

KEYWORDS: Alban Berg, *Wozzeck*, *Lulu*, Michel Foucault, social theory, opera studies, power theory, musicology, systematic musicology

Ever since their world premieres in the 1920s and 30s, Alban Berg's two operas have elicited visceral emotional reactions from audiences. The plots of disturbing and chaotic social dispositions in *Wozzeck* and *Lulu* are exemplified via established character relationships in both works. The driving force of both operatic narratives is largely defined by the influence that characters exert over each other, and in particular, the relationships of the title characters with the people around them. Studies on Berg's opera characters have mostly been focused on socio-cultural reflections of the time and place both works have been written in, with central emphasis on *Wozzeck*'s Expressionistic spirit (see Forneberg, 1959; Keldysch, 1965; Mauser, 1981) and *Lulu*'s mirroring of contemporary views of socio-sexual repression (see Follet, 2000; Ganz, 1987; Lockhead, 1997; Morris, 1995; Pegley, 1998; Taylor-Jay, 1998).

The type of influence and control on display in Berg's operas underscores correlations to themes of power. French philosopher Michel Foucault is renowned for his ideas on power relations, which he refrained from calling theories, preferring to categorize them as an "analytics" of power (Foucault, 2020, p. 82). For the sake of the ensuing discussions, I will delineate Foucault's analytics as theories in as far as they go to present a set of principles that can be practised. As Richard

Lynch suggests, Foucault's theories on power propose that interactions that lead to expressions of power are visible everywhere within a vast array of social relations, but that this should not imply that it is a staple of all forms of social interrelations (Lynch, 2014, p. 15). Foucault specifies an expression of power as a "force relation" (Foucault, 2020, p. 92), which is henceforth the characterization of this type of interaction between individuals. Lynch defines force relation as "consisting of whatever [is] in one's social interactions that pushes, urges, or compels one to do anything" (Lynch, 2014, p. 19). Joseph Rouse concurs, adding that there must also be continuity, because the force relation "depends upon its reenactment or reproduction over time as a sustained power *relationship*" (Rouse, 2003, p. 110).

From these initial notions of Foucauldian power, the purpose of this article is to illustrate how force relations and theories of power govern the decision-making process of Berg's operatic characters, resulting in their ultimate actions. An important distinction to make early on is that, according to Lynch, Foucault presents two different modalities of power: one that is rooted in empiricism, and one that stems from theory. The empirical expressions contain such famous theories as "disciplinary power," "biopower," and "sovereign power" (Lynch, 2014, p. 13),¹ which are primarily discussed in Foucault's book *Discipline and Punish*. These modalities are integrally associated with specific groupings within societies that are less malleable towards abstract modification, and are therefore not applicable as a lens through which Bergian opera can be filtered. The theoretical modality, conversely, is a more foundational and widely-serving representation of force relations that can effectively lend themselves to depicting the interaction and behaviour of individuals that can be inferred as portrayals of social archetypes. This universalizing feature of power is what lends itself to a meaningful analysis of almost any scenario where force relations are clearly on display. Berg's operas are uniquely predisposed to mirroring this framework of social theory because their narrative plots are designed to convey the inherent discontent that is explicitly or implicitly felt when a Foucauldian force relation occurs and a destabilizing outcome ensues. The primary text by Foucault that delves into this purely theoretical manner, which will be this study's sole source of insight into these ideas, is *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: The Will to Knowledge*.

It is now necessary to discuss what Foucault disqualifies as a general view of power that he feels is not relevant to his theories, and which could confuse the meaning of what he purports. Foucault writes:

The word *power* is apt to lead to a number of misunderstandings—misunderstandings with respect to its nature, its form, and its unity. By power, I do not mean 'Power' as a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state. By power, I do not mean, either, a mode of subjugation which, in contrast to violence, has the form of the rule. Finally, I do not have in mind a general system of domination exerted by one group over another, a system whose effects, through successive derivations, pervade the entire social body (Foucault, 2020, p. 92).

¹ See other chapters in this source for analyses of these empirical expressions.

Foucault terms these flawed views of power as an example of a “juridico-discursive” conception of power. This term is classified in this way because it reflects the erroneous belief that Foucault is attempting to dissuade where power is viewed as a manifestation of “a rule of law,” where the seat of power comes from higher echelons of policy making. As we will see, Foucault advocates for the exact opposite, stating that power rather comes from below, meaning that it is mediated from localized sources of basic and direct interaction instead of from unseen authority figures who exercise perceived power by decree. Foucault writes that it is essential that we excise this perception of law-based power in order to understand how power is formulated “within the concrete and historical framework of its operation” (Foucault, 2020, p. 90).

In context of Berg, Foucault’s clarifying passage above on how he does not view power is important because this is ostensibly the framework of power that observers associate with how the ability is expressed in *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*: that it comes from above and is wielded by figures of authority and social prominence between individual agents who are not equals in any rudimentary sense. One can understand how easily this viewpoint can be adopted precisely due to the mechanisms of subservience and subjugation that are so inherent to the social fabric of both works. Therefore, Foucault’s contrary methodology of force relations will isolate the symmetrical symbolisms in Berg’s operas to demonstrate how *Wozzeck* and *Lulu* can be interpreted through this alternate representation of power to enhance our understanding of the kind of disturbing (yet relatable) relationships that these works are famous for. Moreover, through an application of Foucault’s theoretical views of power via force relations, this historical interpretation of power in the operas will shift to display power relations in the compositions as resulting from a free choice that is compelled by the individual exerting power, rather than by institutional control that systematically exercises power over individuals.²

The centrality of Berg in this article using Foucauldian theory as a methodology renders this a musicological study of interdisciplinary proportions. In addition to pinpointing Foucault’s force relations in Berg’s operas using examples from the libretti, the purpose here is to also present a new framework for understanding the multitude of rich symbolism in Berg’s operas, which offer diverse intrigue and application. Therefore, there is potential to expand the general knowledge of these works by retroactively applying Foucault’s principles to them to demonstrate how reflective Berg’s operatic narratives are to this type of social theory. This

² For a different approach to power relations in society, see Wartenberg (1990). In a contrary assessment to that of Foucault, Wartenberg presents his field theory of power that demonstrates how power can have both negative and positive effects on social interactions. In particular, Wartenberg argues how feminist-derived theories of power challenge Foucault’s ideas on the subject. In addition, Wartenberg disputes what he deems as Foucault’s mystical/metaphysical modality of power that Foucault explicitly developed from Nietzsche, which Wartenberg views as dubious because it places too much emphasis on human agency and not enough on situational agency. He also criticizes Foucault’s inherent negativity regarding the latter’s views on power relationships, believing that Foucault falsely characterizes individuals as solely being helpless victims to the power being exerted over them.

sentiment further suggests that works of art that relate to notions of humanism and force relations, which in turn prevail and perpetuate throughout society—no matter how distorted or parodied—can be studied and perceived in this theoretical structure to emplace them within their own socio-cultural time and beyond. Moreover, this symbolic association between art and humanism can address a potential misgiving over this article's aim because it is applying Foucault's theories to fictional characters. Although understandable from a practical perspective (regarding the fact that Foucault theorized about real people and situations), the doubts cast on whether such an analysis can be meaningful is assuaged, I believe, because Berg's characters are such striking extensions of our own thought and behavioural systems, and also act as reflections of tangible (albeit parodied) social structures. Consequently, the level of allegorical realism in the core meaning of these operas renders them receptive and appropriate to Foucauldian interpretation and deepens the perception of these works.³

Foucauldian Power Relations in Berg's Opera Narratives

Foucault's expansive definition of power via force relations can be broken up into sections and systematically applied to Berg's operatic characters. Foucault writes:

It seems to me that power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies (Foucault, 2020, pp. 92–93).

When describing force relations within the sphere that they operate in, Foucault is referring to smaller-scale relationships that are not on the broad level of institutional or governmental relations. This first form is therefore connected more to everyday contact between people that influences individuals to act in certain ways. As Foucault states, this is an organization, which suggests repeated and extended exposure. One could view it even as a community of familiarity. Indeed, the title characters of Berg's operas derive virtually all of their actions from the manner in which the people around them compel them to behave. In other words, this is an organization where individuals exercise agency over other individuals. Berg's operas are veritable treatises in the activities of self-serving force relations that are thrust upon others in order to make them obey imperatives. However, for Foucault, the success of this relation is contingent upon the

³ Filtering Berg's operatic characters through diverse and interdisciplinary methods is not new. Two such works that can be viewed as methodologically-adjacent to the present article are: (Cordingly, 2015); (Platt, 2016).

freedom and willingness of the person being influenced to accept the relation being exerted on them. Certainly, Foucault writes: "There cannot be relations of power unless the subjects are free...if there are relations of power throughout every social field it is because there is freedom everywhere" (Foucault, 1994, p. 12). In *Wozzeck*, the title character has duties, but also the freedom of movement. Despite this, though, his low social standing exerts an expression of power over him, inciting the motivic line that Wozzeck frequently laments: "Wir arme Leut" ("we poor people"). Musically speaking, George Perle describes the passage in the score that features the "Wir arme Leut" motif, which Berg designates as an "air," as the form of that opening scene is built upon Baroque dance forms. Perle notes the "lyrical character" of Wozzeck's lament, where the orchestration is always chamber-like in this scene, and uses many solo instruments (Perle, 1980, pp. 47–48). Furthermore, the music of this motif is restated throughout the opera, particularly when Wozzeck is mocked and beaten by the Drum Major, and also after when he dejectedly slumps down following this defeat (Perle, 1980, pp. 97–98). The musical motif of Wozzeck's lowliness and the power it wields over him accompanies his humiliations.

Next, Foucault says that these force relations are in a constant state of flux, where changes occur and the exerted force is adhered to or resisted. In *Lulu*, for example, the trope of gender opposition is a central tenet of the opera where men sexually objectify Lulu's womanhood in an effort to control her. The exerted force misleadingly works when the men believe they have the upper hand over Lulu, but the resisting shift eventually manifests in the violent deaths of the men who attempted the force relation upon her. This is the "disjunction" or lack of balance that Foucault spoke of. Isolating the last part of Foucault's definition of power, the power relations that are expressed between individuals can be seen as a paradigm of "institutional crystallizations," or, in other words, large-scale structures of society and state. To be sure, Berg intended both of his operas to reflect the macro element of society's moral and behavioral dispositions, which are articulated in micro localized force relations between individuals. Berg's natural propensity for social parody (i.e. *Wozzeck's* critique on class inequality and *Lulu's* discourse on the hypocrisy of sexual morality) through art effectively encompasses Foucault's view of a symbiotic cause and effect scenario between these micro and macro relationships of power. There is an inherent sense of circularity here between society influencing individuals, and individuals in turn influencing the formation of social archetypes. In his discussion of Foucauldian power, Joseph Rouse describes this reciprocal function of power placed back upon society as a "distribution throughout complex social networks. The actions of the peripheral agents in these networks are often what establish or enforce the connections between what a dominant agent does and the fulfillment or frustration of a subordinate agent's desires" (Rouse, 2003, p. 109). This repetitive system is at the center of *Wozzeck* in particular with the large-scale palindromic repeat of the narrative when Wozzeck's innocent and orphaned son is poised to take his father's place and inherit his force relation as an individual who is helplessly subservient to individual agents who epitomize the power apparatus of their shared state and society. This realization is musically framed by the formal designation

of the opera's final scene as an "Invention on a Continuous Eight-Note Motion," where the ostinato figure abruptly stops in such a way that implies that it could continue, signifying the circular function of the son taking the father's place. Berg also describes this repetitive feature when he writes: "Although it [*Wozzeck's* ending] clearly cadences on the final chord, it creates the feeling that it could keep going. In fact, it does keep going! The first measures of the opera might well link up harmonically with these final measures without further ado, thus closing the circle. Here is the end of the opera, then the beginning" (Berg, 2014, p. 232).

From these theories, we see how Foucault built his conception of power like a pyramid starting from the bottom with small, familiar, and local manifestations of force relations that subsequently expanded into larger representations of power via institutions. Foucault elaborates on the essence of this form of growth in five additional points that he employs to further develop his ideas on power. To begin, in his first point, Foucault writes that power is not taken or held, but is rather signified through a myriad of force relations (Foucault, 2020, p. 94). Lulu does not possess any sort of traditional power that is measured in tangible positions of authority. No, she compels people around her to irrationally desire her sexually through suggestion, which deeply seduces everyone around her. Power is localized and directly interactional between free agents who technically have freedom of choice, but ultimately succumb to the force relation. The people around Lulu act upon her suggestion, which renders the circumstances of these relationships as authentic staples of Foucauldian power. For example, the lesbian Countess Geschwitz, who loves Lulu, recognizes how Lulu manipulates her when, towards the end of the opera, she tells Lulu: "You deceived me and consciously did so. I never could envy the way that you torment the victims who serve you. You don't inspire me with envy. I feel myself free as a god, when I think what a tool of other creatures you are" (Berg, 1978, p. 86).⁴ The Countess here attempts to demonstrate her resistance and perceived freedom, but the dialogue with Lulu ends here and there is no direct response to this assertive articulation. However, later in the scene when Lulu is strategizing how to get herself out of a sticky situation, she calls out to the Countess and says: "My dearest heart, be kind and rescue me from death and torture" (Berg, 1978, p. 94),⁵ to which Geschwitz replies: "What must I do?" (Berg, 1978, p. 94).⁶ The force relation that occurs here is palpable, and demonstrates Geschwitz's freedom of realization, but also her ultimate acquiescence to the power that is expressed.

Foucault's second point is that power relations are measured by the "divisions, inequalities, and disequilibriums" (Foucault, 2020, p. 94) within social interactions. These details are explicit within *Wozzeck* and *Lulu* as destabilizing qualities that influence the power relations between the characters. The key is that these are "internal conditions of these differentiations" (Foucault, 2020, p. 94),

⁴"Du betrogst mich mit vollem Bewußtsein. Ich neide dir nicht die Geschicklichkeit, hilflose Opfer zu martern. Ich kann dich ja gar nicht beneiden. Ich fühle mich frei wie ein Gott, wenn ich denke, welch Kreaturen Sklavin du bist."

⁵"Mein liebes Herz, du kannst mich heute vor dem Tode retten."

⁶"Wie kann ich das?"

meaning that power is not only an exterior phenomenon, but is also a form of behavioural conditioning within an individual's psyche. The distinctly unbalanced nature of how Foucault describes this is symmetrical to the Expressionistic ethos of distorted reality in *Wozzeck*, and grotesque social parody in *Lulu*, both of which are meant to disturb and unsettle rational perceptions of normalcy. For example, *Wozzeck's* intensifying madness expands in hallucinatory utterances when he states: "Man is an abyss, it makes you dizzy when you look down...it makes me dizzy" (Berg, 1952, p. 13).⁷ Meanwhile, in *Lulu*, the title character is seducing the son of her murdered husband upon a piece of furniture, and in a ridiculing manner of his helplessness asks him: "Isn't this the sofa on which your father bled to death?" (Berg, 1978, p. 77).⁸ The underlying negativity of the symbolic meaning of the two operas mirrors Foucault's expression of differentiations in his second point. Despite the symmetry that Berg's plots and characters share with this notion by Foucault, this attitude that the philosopher projects here reflects the issue that Thomas Wartenberg has with Foucault's propensity for interpreting power with such one-dimensional bleakness. The purpose of the present article is to synchronize Foucault with Berg, so it is not within the aims to delve into alternate and opposing philosophies of power, but it is interesting to briefly point out, nevertheless.

The third point, which was alluded to earlier, is that "power comes from below" (Foucault, 2020, p. 94), referring to the freedom to choose within a local and familiar framework between equals, rather than having policy dictated from above by a king or other such figure of authority. Power is wielded from the intersection of several force relations, which for Berg's operatic characters, are individuals who exhibit demonstrations of force that translate into manifestations of power over other individuals who are generally on equal footing with each other in terms of proximity and approachability. Once again, power forces one to freely choose how to behave and act through suggestion rather than direct command. This issue brings up an interesting notion of power in *Wozzeck*. In this opera, *Wozzeck* is controlled by everyone around him, but does this equate to authentic Foucauldian power being exerted over him? The fact is that based on non-Foucauldian views, the Captain, Doctor, Marie, Drum Major, and even society in general all have power over *Wozzeck*. However, from Foucault's perspective, only Marie (*Wozzeck's* common-law wife) exerts a force relation that is equivalent to an expression of power over *Wozzeck*, who feels most betrayed and lied to by Marie, even if he experiences great abuse at the hands of everyone around him. Only Marie has the ability to influence *Wozzeck* to commit actionable change, whereas the other characters solely torture him, but do not compel him. For this reason, Marie is the lone character whom *Wozzeck* murders. Indeed, when *Wozzeck* confronts Marie for her infidelity with the Drum Major, her rude reply pushes him to rush at her, to which she snaps: "Do not touch me! Better a knife

⁷ "Der Mensch ist ein Abgrund, es schwindelt Einem, wenn mann hinunterschaut...mich schwindelt."

⁸ "...Ist das noch der Diwan, – auf dem sich – deinVater – verblutet hat?"

in the body than a hand on me” (Berg, 1952, p. 13).⁹ Her subtle power over him leads Wozzeck to contemplate the implications of this comment, prophetically repeating Marie’s words aloud: “Lieber ein Messer...” (“Better a knife...”) (Berg, 1952, p. 13). It is precisely with a knife that Wozzeck murders Marie in the final act, having conformed to her force relation and used a knife to stab her with rather than laying a hand on her. Wozzeck endured his torments for Marie, so as his inspiring impetus, she exerts true power over him even if this is not her goal, while the other characters only have authority over him as his superiors. This does not correspond to a true force relation because power comes from below instead of from above. Marie is Wozzeck’s familiar equal, where their direct interaction within the most localized system between free agents signifies her singular expression of resulting power over him (cf. Greene, 1985). Berg accentuates this force relation musically by framing Wozzeck’s accusations of infidelity with the thematic music that alludes to Marie’s affair with the Drum Major. When Wozzeck goes to strike Marie, the music from the close of Act I, associated with Marie’s concession to the Drum Major’s advances, is played (Perle, 1980, pp. 68–69). These allusions and references in the music signify the composer’s reflection on the dramatic action. The motif representing references to the knife is an important musical figure, as it reoccurs when Wozzeck sees Marie and the Drum Major dancing together, and then again in the climactic moment when Marie comments on the blood red moon, prompting Wozzeck to draw the knife and murder her with it. Its last iteration in the score is when Wozzeck wades out into the pond, believing that he did not throw the incriminating evidence far enough to prevent discovery, where he subsequently drowns in his attempt to retrieve the knife (Perle, 1980, pp. 114–116).

Foucault’s next point is slightly ambiguous. He writes: “Power relations are both intentional and nonsubjective. If in fact they are intelligible, this is not because they are the effect of another instance that ‘explains’ them, but rather because they are imbued, through and through, with calculation: there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives. But this does not mean that it results from the choice or decision of an individual subject” (Foucault, 2020, p. 94–95). The first part about power being intentional with both aims and objectives is clear enough. Ultimate freedom of choice is granted to the individual, even if their actions will likely be an expression of the force relation exerted upon them. This speaks to intentionality as a clearly-derived purpose. None of the narrative events in *Wozzeck* and *Lulu* display dubiousness of intent. Indeed, both opera plots suggest that destiny is unavoidable and that the characters of both works are essentially trapped in their designated social roles. This latter notion accentuates Foucault’s point that power is also nonsubjective. This idea seemingly removes agency from the individual and emphasizes this dimension of power that is more broad. In other words, the force relations that individuals exert, eventually result in numerous contained expressions of power that can conflate, consolidate, and ultimately apply power back over the individual. This is a type of relationship that is clear in Berg’s operas, as mentioned

⁹ “Rühr’ mich nicht an! Lieber ein Messer in den Leib, als eine Hand auf mich.”

earlier, where conditioned behaviours and moral dispositions in a social construct become self-perpetuating paradigms due to mass repetition. The force relation associated with the subsequent need to conform is how this becomes an example of nonsubjective power in Foucauldian terms. Berg's operas are parodies of this opposing duality between intentional and nonsubjective power in how they bestow agency upon characters that is at once based on their choices, but which strictly mirrors the wider structures to which each individual choice still belongs to. For example, in *Wozzeck*, Marie and Wozzeck are free to raise their child, but the social strictures surrounding their disreputable union and the child's lack of a baptism exerts a nonsubjective force relation over the parents. Likewise, in *Lulu*, the title character has intentional agency to compel men as she will, but is simultaneously trapped in the nonsubjective power relation of the sexualized male gaze, which is the larger arena to which Lulu belongs and must conform to. Richard Lynch calls this a "system-level rather than an individual-level understanding of power relations" (Lynch, 2014, p. 23).

Foucault's fifth and final point can be seen as attempting to address the issue of free agency in the previous point. He writes: "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault, 2020, p. 95). Resistance is the key ingredient in qualifying a relation of power between individuals. This is particularly potent in *Lulu* where the characters can both recognize and verbalize how ensnared they are by Lulu's will, and yet, are powerless to resist, like the previous example with the Countess Geschwitz. This does not mean that they do not try to gain freedom from her influence, but that they later simply admit to its futility. Indeed, when Lulu is exerting her power over Dr. Schön, she makes it clear to him "...that you are powerless to cut yourself loose from me" (Berg, 1978, p. 41),¹⁰ with which Dr. Schön regretfully concurs. In this particular scene, Lulu uses her tenuous move to Africa as leverage to manipulate Dr. Schön to break off his engagement to another woman in order to marry Lulu instead and keep her near him. These series of events are characterized musically by the motif of Dr. Schön's doomed love for Lulu that kills him. The motif of this destructive love and essential force relation is not heard again following Dr. Schön's death until the final scene when Jack the Ripper, Dr. Schön's double, appears as an inversion of fate when Lulu is finally killed (Perle, 1985, p. 80). Later on, after Lulu has married and then murdered Dr. Schön, she is seducing the latter's son, Alwa. She reminds him that she murdered his father, to which Alwa replies: "Yet I still love you nonetheless for that. Come! One more kiss! One more kiss! One more kiss!" (Berg, 1978, p. 75).¹¹ In the next moment, Alwa's line reads: "If it were not for your two childlike eyes I look into, I should say you were the most designing of whores and bitches who ever inveigled a man to his doom" (Berg, 1978, p. 75).¹² These exchanges demonstrate Lulu's force relation to just two

¹⁰ "...daß Sie zu schwach sind, um sich von mir loszureißen."

¹¹ "Deswegen liebe ich dich nicht weniger. Komm! Einen Kuß! Einen Kuß! Einen Kuß!"

¹² "Wenn deine beiden großen Kinderaugen nicht wären, müßte ich dich für die abgefemtteste Dirne halten, die je einen Mann ins Verderben gestürzt."

characters who recognize and freely (albeit begrudgingly) submit to her power. The resistance is slight and ultimately ineffective, yet discernable nonetheless. Lulu never commands anyone outright, but rather weaponizes her indifference towards and evasiveness of the male gaze. She knows this will only harden the men's resolve to possess her, giving her the upper hand in these force relations, which are more effectively in her favour because it is power that comes from below due to the localized familiarity of her rapport with the men around her.

By stating that resistance is never exterior from the power relation, Foucault clarifies that he does not mean that there is no escape from the relation, but that there are different types of resistances, i.e. "necessary; improbable; spontaneous; and savage" (Foucault, 2020, p. 96), which are all exercised within the force relation, hence never being exterior from the relation itself. Berg's characters constitute both what Foucault means and what he cautions as a potential misunderstanding of his intention, namely that a lack of exteriority suggests no "escape" from the force relation. The fact that Berg's characters are trapped in their existential constructs is an additional dimension to its Foucauldian applications. Nevertheless, what Foucault deems as "a plurality of resistances" (Foucault, 2020, p. 96) within the force relation is evident in both operas. Wozzeck resists Marie's power over him by murdering her, while men attempt to resist Lulu by marrying her off to others; incarcerating her; or trying to convince her to kill herself. All of these ploys of resistance in the operas reflect free-choice reactions to the force relation exhibited over them.

In terms of instilling alternative interpretations of force relations in the two analyzed operas, it was argued above that Marie was the fundamental force relation over Wozzeck due to the actions that she alone compelled him to take. But regardless of the perspective with which Wozzeck is judged, it is rather impossible to view him in any guise other than the one upon whom power is being exercised. Lulu, conversely, is the indisputable instigator of a force relation with virtually everyone she comes into contact with until the opera's final scene and her own murder at the very end. Is it possible, therefore, to view Lulu as being on the receiving end of a force relation in any way? If force relations are localized expressions between individuals of free and equal standing, then it is difficult to imagine Lulu acting out of someone else's compulsion in the opera proper. However, *Lulu* is an opera with a Prologue, and it is in this fascinating opening, which takes place outside of the opera's time and space, that one could possibly hypothesize an inverse force relation made upon Lulu by the Animal Tamer. Indeed, it is the Animal Tamer who is speaking to the empirical audience of the opera, and introducing Lulu with the following text: "She as the root of all evil was created; to snare us, to mislead us she was fated, and to murder, with no clue left on the spot. My sweet beast, please don't be what you're not! You have no right to seem a gentler creature, distorting what is true in woman's nature" (Berg, 1978, p. 2).¹³ This statement is musically designated as "Lulu's Entrance

¹³ "Sie ward geschaffen, Unheil anzustiften, zu locken, zu verführen, zu vergiften. Und zu morden, ohne daß es einer spürt."

Music,” and becomes a motif of her seductive essence. Later in the opera, when Lulu is defending accusations of inauthenticity, she mirrors the Animal Tamer’s introduction of her by stating: “I have never wanted to appear in another guise than the one in which I am known. Nor has any man in my life been led to look on me as other than what I am” (Berg, 1978, p. 61).¹⁴ Moreover, previously to this, when asked what she is, Lulu again parrots the Animal Tamer by expressing that she is “a beast” (“ein Tier”) (Berg, 1978, p. 19). From these examples, we see that Lulu is compelled to live up to the representation of her that the Animal Tamer depicted in the Prologue. If Lulu’s entire identity and perception of self is a reflection of how the Animal Tamer told her to behave, act, and view herself, then this is certainly an example of a Foucauldian force relation at play, even if the relational nature between Lulu and the Animal Tamer is a tenuous one. For, although they shared the stage in the Prologue when the Animal Tamer made his plea to her, Lulu was carried out like an inanimate puppet in an effort to further obfuscate the realism of the Prologue due to its function as a direct appeal to the audience itself before the opera proper begins. Nevertheless, due to the fact that Lulu internalizes and attempts to embody the Animal Tamer’s projection of her, these events are connected and bear traces of a conditioning that is akin to a force relation.

This theory of the Animal Tamer can be expanded further. Within the operas, both *Wozzeck* and *Lulu* directly murder precisely one person. If *Wozzeck* murdered Marie as an expression of resisting the most potent force relation that results in power over him, can a similar conclusion be reached with Lulu’s murder of Dr. Schön? It was just suggested that Lulu spent the duration of the opera conforming to the force relation that the Animal Tamer exercised over her. Even if the Animal Tamer was not empirically present in the opera proper, his agency via the magnitude of his force relation was embodied and carried out by the various male characters, chief among them, Dr. Schön and his son Alwa. This association between the Animal Tamer and the male characters is slightly contradictory, though, because although the Animal Tamer could plausibly be seen as the agent of influence over Lulu, Dr. Schön and Alwa were the ones over whom Lulu held sway. However, an argument can be made that the Animal Tamer’s force relation is personified as the subjugating male gaze, which Lulu wishes to break free from, and which is symbolized by the two men whom she controls. In that sense, despite Lulu having the upper hand over these two particular men in her life, she herself is inversely impacted by the force relation that they represent. The contradiction stems from the fact that the music Berg composed in thematic association with the Animal Tamer also doubles as Alwa’s music (Jarman, 1991, p. 22). Perle also adds: “It is Alwa who speaks in the Prologue, in the person of the Animal Tamer, and he speaks for the author of the drama and the composer of the opera. It is *us*, the audience, whom he invites to see the beasts in his menagerie, and it is *us*, as well as the characters on stage, whom his first words, ‘May I come

¹⁴ “Ich habe nie in der Welt etwas anderes scheinen wollen, als wofür man mich genommen hat; und man hat mich nie in der Welt für etwas anderes genommen, als was ich bin.”

in?', address, when he enters in his own person at the rise of the curtain on Act I" (Perle, 1985, p. 116). Moreover, Douglas Jarman confirms the Animal Tamer's influence throughout the opera, noting that when Jack murders Lulu, he utters the words that Dr. Schön spoke in the first act, while the orchestra plays a variation of the prologue's circus music (Jarman, 1991, p. 90). If the schematic of the hypothesis is to mirror the procedure in *Wozzeck*, then Lulu would have had to kill Alwa, as he is the Animal Tamer's avatar in the opera, rather than Dr. Schön. Nevertheless, for the sake of argument, Alwa can be conflated with Dr. Schön in this instance due to their shared representation as symbols who perpetuate the Animal Tamer's projection of identity onto Lulu as the semblance of power that she is suppressed by. Therefore, it stands to reason that Lulu killing Dr. Schön still fits the pattern of a Bergian protagonist attempting to resist their force relation with violence. In the case of both operas, the title characters were driven by a visceral impulse, the outcome of which would result in their immediate decline and own ultimate deaths. The success of their resistances is difficult to fathom in context of their own unpleasant endings, but the motivation of action as a response to the force exerted over them is clear. The music captures this as well at the end of *Lulu*, where, as Perle notes, "the three concluding chords of the final act epitomize the fate of the three persons most profoundly involved with Lulu" (Perle, 1985, p. 190). The music harmonically leads from the A major chord connected to Dr. Schön, to the A minor triad signifying Alwa, and lastly, to the B natural that closes the opera with Geschwitz's harmony (Perle, 1985, p. 190). The opera's most potent force relations are therefore musically recapitulated in quick succession to end the drama.

Conclusion

Within the context of Foucault's ideas regarding a theoretical application of power, *Wozzeck* and *Lulu* can be viewed as logical embodiments of every individual point that Foucault put forth. Explicit force relations abound amidst key relationships between the operatic title characters and the individuals with whom they form the most telling examples of these relations. In inverse proportion, *Wozzeck* is clearly the weaker entity who attempts to resist the force exercised over him, while Lulu is largely (but not solely) the dominant figure in her relations whom others attempt to resist. Perhaps the most interesting detail relating the two operas to Foucault is how the works reflect both macro (structures of society and state), and micro (localized force relations) correspondences pertaining to exhibited force relations between individuals and socio-cultural institutions, respectively. Indeed, the operas are a perpetual interplay of these two types of specific and broad applications of power, which positions them as effective metaphors for Foucault's theories. In addition, by interpreting the operas themselves through this Foucauldian lens, a new dialectic of insight emerges that expands the humanistic scope of these works, which has always been a leading incentive that has historically rendered *Wozzeck* and *Lulu* as important conduits of innate behavioural and moral characteristics within us all. The Foucauldian

implementation, therefore, speaks to the renewability of the operas within interdisciplinary frameworks that further increases the viability of these works as belonging to more than just the era in which they were composed.

As a contribution to musicology and opera studies in particular, the manner in which Foucauldian power and force relations were analyzed in this article can be meaningfully applied to other mainstream operas of the twentieth century. There are at least three such works of historical significance that an incorporation of this theoretical foundation would arguably contribute to enhancing the perception of the multi-faceted symbolisms therein. Leoš Janáček's opera *Jenůfa* (1904) is centered around force relations found in a rural village that practises strained relationships of influence between different individuals. Dimitri Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (1934) depicts a central female character who, not unlike Lulu, engages in machinations throughout the opera that are expressions of force relations that at times work for and against her. Benjamin Britten's opera *Peter Grimes* (1945) is often compared to *Wozzeck* for the similarity that both title characters share as social outcasts who are consistently oppressed by the people around them. Force relations abound in this work between Grimes and individuals that he comes in contact with. Like Berg's operas, all three of these compositions could benefit from an application of Foucault's theories on power to broaden the understanding of their own figurative representations.

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