

ACADEMY OF PERFORMING ARTS IN PRAGUE

THEATRE FACULTY

International MA

Stage Design

MASTER'S THESIS

Lulu, Ellie or Lily

Politics on Women's Clothing

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Date of thesis defense: 13th of January, 2022

Academic title granted: Master of Arts

Prague, 2022

AKADEMIE MÚZICHÝCH UMĚNÍ V PRAZE

DIVADELNÍ FAKULTA

Mezinárodní

MA Scénografie

DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

Lulu, Ellie or Lily

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Zkoušející: MGA. MARTIN ČERNÝ

Datum obhajoby práce: 13th of January, 2022

Akademický titul udělený: Master of Arts

Praha, 2022

D e c l a r a t i o n

I declare that I have prepared my Bachelor's Thesis/Master's Thesis, Dissertation independently on the following topic:

Lulu, Ellie or Lily

Politics on Women's Clothing

Based on Lulu by Frank Wedekind

under the expert guidance of my thesis advisor and with the use of the cited literature and sources.

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Abstract

The topic of this Master thesis is an analysis of the female positioning in societies throughout the years. Derived by the theatrical play 'Lulu' that is consisted by The Earth Spirit and Pandora's Box and written by the German playwright Frank Wedekind (1864-1918). Matters as the depiction of femininity and its subtle connection with the politics around female clothing, in a more modern concept, enriched my research on the topic and extended it to contemporary aspects of social favoritism, marginalization and how porn industry uses female body. I hereby try to point out that discrimination is not based on personal factors but it could be aiming anyone not complying with the norm that society and fashion industry dictated.

Abstrakt

Tato diplomová práce analyzuje postavení žen ve společnosti v průběhu let skrze divadelní hru Lulu německého dramatika Franka Wedekinda (1864-1918), kterou tvoří díly Duch země a Pandořina skříňka. Látka jako zobrazení ženskosti a její propojení s politikou odívání žen v moderním pojetí obohatily můj výzkum na toto téma a rozšířily ho na současné aspekty společenského zvýhodňování, marginalizace a způsobu, jakým pornoprůmysl využívá ženské tělo. Tím poukazuji na skutečnost, že diskriminace není založena osobních faktorech, ale může postihnout kohokoliv, kdo nevyhovuje normám nastavených společností a módním průmyslem.

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"Disobedience, in the eyes of anyone who has read history, is man's original virtue. It is through disobedience that progress has been made, through disobedience and through rebellion."

Oscar Wilde

I. Introduction

The decision for the topic of this thesis occurred to me the first time I came across the theatrical play "Lulu" by Frank Wedekind. The way his work is intertwined with his true life, in combination with the times he lived and published his work is entirely inspiring. His provocative efforts towards female liberation in a sexual and political spectrum gave the society a great shock and only with time his work is understood by a growing part of population.

Equality of the sexes has gone through a rollercoaster of winning ground for women and being pushed back to household labor. Luckily the past years are marked by an upturn that gives women the courage needed to stay focused to the ascending cause. The one where they are able to make their own deliberate choices.

It starts from the little things in life, like what we choose to wear and how truly free we are to make uninfluenced decisions. How easy is it for women to come under fire for anything they fit into? The story then goes on to a woman possessing any form of power. That power could be, being independent or just falling out of the cliché roles she was given, and it automatically transforms her into a 'threat to mankind', especially to those that simply don't know how to exist outside their assigned role of male and female. Soon after the female gender started demanding more opportunities the males started accusing them with so much hatred about something that still no one really knows what it is.

Tracing back to the Industrial Revolution and the Second World War, men's gender roles were that of the breadwinner. Men made up a majority of the labor force while women were socialized and taught to embrace the cult of domesticity and homemaking. [1]

We face a positive turnout not because women won complete equality, but because more and more people started realizing the deep level of inequality of the past centuries. The objectification of women goes back to the first time paintings were used as the first form of sexual depiction of the female body. Only to be followed by years of oppression and restriction of the feminine power and opportunities. The postmodern female identity is always subject to change. Slowly, women have a chance to change and model life according to personal choice, but this time dealing with another strong influential factor, the images provided by mass culture and the ideals they provide on modeling one's personal identity. Social role models, cultural texts provided by the media and images can shape acceptable or improper patterns of behavior.

Regardless of the years to pass there are elements from Lulu's life on objectifying the female body and fetishizing women's clothing that are still present. In this text, driven by the junction of two theatrical plays, written by Frank Wedekind under the name of Lulu, I attempt to unfold my thoughts in combination with researched facts regarding the female matter.

II. About Wedekind

This distinguishing author is known is known for his "hedonistic lifestyle and remarkable artistry" through his lifelong work. [2]

Wedekind was considered to be a controversial persona, constantly provoking with his lifestyle and plays he created. His work was widely recognized only long after his death. Some of his personal manuscripts and diaries where published by his daughter Pamela Wedekind only a few years back, exposing unpublished parts of his overbearing life under the name *Die Tagebücher: ein erotisches Leben* (1986; *Diary of an Erotic Life*).



Tilly Neves and Frank Wedekind

By his play *Lulu* he unfolds the topics that are on the top of his exploration interests hoping to trigger the narrowed minds of the time being society.

Early critiques consider it to be "the climax of Wedekind's artistic creativity" and the most significant of the author's work. [3]

He chose not to allow any restrictions in his life regarding the people he acquainted and he shows this strongly on all of his writings. Wedekind was drawn aside by anything that seemed not normal, or at least he was pushed away from conventional or mainstream situations and this helped him to discover new pleasures in life, the forbidden ones. The conditions in which he spend his early adulthood years helped him shape his future shelf and career path. Following a circus means complying with very different rules and balances around morality, solidarity and liberties.

Starting from his early years, growing up in a castle in Switzerland and leading to his years to come in Berlin, Munich, Paris and London, living an *erotic vie de boheme*. His economic instability led him to diverse jobs from advertising jingles to long collaboration with a circus that in the end inspired him wildly. Amongst his multiple jobs he used to write numerous texts that where never published or produced.

His sexual orientation was unlimited in real life and he would draw inspiration from his experiences to enrich his plays in a provokingly educative way.

This lifestyle came from his true inner shelf and was only provocative to the extent of defying puritanism all around him. His devotion to his work was true enough to make him perform in all of his productions and recite all of his poems in cabarets mostly because it was part of his expressive style. When he eventually met his wife Tilly Neves, he dedicated himself completely to her and was most of the times driven to extremity due to his jealousy. Their matrimony gave two daughters, Pamela and Kadidja but

also brought Tilly to the edge of filing for a divorce several times due to Frank's possessiveness.

Ii. On Equality

His whole work was committed to the sexual liberation of mankind by challenging it. He is considered to be a founder of expressionism. Even though seemingly the movement started in Germany in the early twentieth century, artists in France were using this style long before, naming *Spring Awakening* one of the first works of the movement, acknowledging also that it is not fully expressionistic.

Wedekind was creating plays that most of the times explored female liberation and sexuality. This orientation came from his general concern and interest regarding the position of women in society. He was driven by the urge to examine the basic relationship of the sexes and the role women would undertake in marriage, prostitution, education or abortion. At the time, he stood opposed to the feminist movement believing in the power of bringing back woman's true nature. This term referred to an ancient version of a myth describing a matriarchal world. Despite presenting himself as a

moral critic, he would also recognize a hierarchy of the sexes and believed it was a necessity, up to an extent.

Modern times in Western cultures changed the perception of women's role, even though prostitution is definitely considered a taboo matter with society pretending it doesn't exist.

III. Summary of the Play

Lulu consists of two plays that were later on merged into one, for the purposes of the performance, under the instructions of the publisher Albert Langen. The first book, published in 1895 named *The Earth Spirit* (*Der Erdgeist*) contained three acts while the second one, *Pandora's Box* (*Die Buche der Pandora*) was consisted of two more acts. The two 'Lulu Plays' had to go through various adaptations for performative reasons due to the length of the playwrights as two separate plays until they were compressed into one.

Act one is placed in the atelier of a young painter, Schwartz, while having a conversation with a client Dr. Schön. Lulu is getting a portrait done, ordered by her jealous husband Dr. Goll and while he is occupied by Dr. Schön, Schwartz expresses his lust towards Lulu and chases her around the

room. In a moment that they fall on a sofa, Goll enters, sees them and in his attempt to manhandle the painter he gets a heart attack and falls dead. The incident leaves Lulu cold hearted.

Following up in Act two Lulu has become the wife of the now thriving painter Schwartz. A key character is introduced, a visitor named Schigolch, presented as Lulu's father-protector. Lulu is once more unhappy in her marriage and contains an affair with Dr. Schön who has been a lifelong protecting figure and lover in her life. She expresses her discomfort to him but he is there to break their connection and announce he is engaged to be married. In an attempt to dissolve the affair, he reveals it all to the husband, Schwartz, who against his expectations loses his self-esteem and all hope in life, and commits suicide. This act disrupts all balance and thus Schön takes Lulu as his new wife.

Act three revolves around Lulu's marriage with Schön. She encounters with his son, Alwa, with an acrobat named Rodrigo and Countess Geschwitz, a young arrogant lady who is attracted to Lulu. They all mercilessly deride Schön, at his absence, for his status being in despair.

When Schön reenters the room he sees only Lulu. He puts a gun in her hand hoping that she would put an end to her life and in that way set him free. In the next scene everything happens fast and in great tension, her cohort rushes out of their hiding places to save Lulu, only to see her turn the weapon in the last moment and give a lethal shot at her husband, Schön. Amongst the greatest confusion after her act, she tries to convince Alwa

not to hand her over to the police, which would be the end of her. The death of Dr Schön signals the end of the first book of Lulu, The Earth Spirit.

Opening Pandora's Box we are still located in Germany, at the same house, only that now it belongs to Alwa Schön who is pursuing a career in writing and just had his first publication with Lulu as his muse. One and a half year has passed with Lulu in prison but this is the day everything will change again. With the initiative plan by Geschwitz and the later help of the rest, the two woman managed to find themselves isolated in a hospital room and conspire to their freedom. Now they all await her arrival with vivid anticipation, the Countess as always with her secret passion for her love to be eventually responded to, Schigolch as a loyal servant ready for her orders, Rodrigo Quast, the acrobat waiting to be compensated for the money he spent for his part of the escape plan and lastly Alwa anticipating with awe due to his secret passion for her.

Shortly after her arrival Rodrigo bursts in to a delirium, he is openly disappointed by the looks of Lulu as he was planning to use her in his circus performances in order to make more money through her. He abandons them with threats.

When they are at last left alone with Alwa the intimacy and affection amongst the two of them is profoundly present despite the fact she killed his father. They decide to run away together, fleeing from her pursuers.

Act five is located in Paris. The newlywed couple is living a lavishing lifestyle, spending every penny from Schön's last fortune and gamble on investments with their new entourage of flatterers. Their past is still lurking, from the German police to Rodrigo, the acrobat, that followed them to Paris and threatens to hand Lulu in every time he appetites another cash amount. On top of them, a vicious guest named Casti-Piani is blackmailing her to go work in a brothel in Cairo as part of his long term investment plan. Lulu, trying to escape them, finds comfort in Schigolch who suddenly reappears and cooks up a plan in order to get rid of Rodrigo once and for all with the help of Countess Geschwitz. At the last moment before the police arrives, Lulu comes up with a transformative escape plan that saves her freedom. Her tragedy is fulfilled when all of their investments with Alwa in share collapse leaving them with nothing.

The last act takes place in London. Living in a miserable, cold and dark attic, Lulu is working as a prostitute, trying to make some money to support herself, Alwa and Schigolch. When Countess Geschwitz appears, she bears the most valuable thing in this attic, the large painting of Lulu dressed as Pierrot that helps shed some light in their lives. She tries to prevent her from exposing herself out there but it is impossible to convince her since Geschwitz is out of her wealth as well and cannot provide for Lulu. Geschwitz is dealing with a constant internal battle of love and hatred for Lulu blaming her as well for the sad turn in her life.

After those dead end efforts we witness a series of unfortunate clients to come. Starting with a doctor that is, or pretends to be, mute and they

strangely communicate through pantomime. Moving on to a self-proclaimed prince of Africa, who gets haunted by the attic and kills Alwa accidentally out of fear. Next in line is Dr. Hilti, a newbie that runs away unsuccessful to his purpose after witnessing a suicide attempt by Geschwitz. Lastly a strange man appears that happens to be Jack the Ripper. After a while he manages to murder both Lulu and Geschwitz with the last one confessing her love feelings to Lulu for the first time, using her final breath.

The strong aftermath of this play, in a personal level is the objectification and psychological maltreatment Lulu has to endure. It is on both of her two first marriages that her husband's deliberately decide to call her by different names other than her own and continue fixating her with specific clothing to fulfill their fantasies. Consent is not mentioned in any of those cases. When a man feels he possess her, she no longer tastes his admiration or affection. On the contrary, she is always to blame for their jealousy.

IV. Contemporary aspects

I take as a base that each one of us is born in a place and time not by choice but by pure luck. How we treat our life path after that is our personal choice and is severely affected by the socioeconomic factors we live in.

World changing aspects erupt day by day. Female position has crossed miles over miles of change and is still fighting towards gender equality but with education and career as their allies. The biggest support has been proven to be the solidarity of each other and technology has helped to create global networks that connect women's movements around the world. Over the years, society labeled women, one way or another with the higher aim to keep them under control. With the rebirth of feminism in the early 1970s western women set the base for erasing the ancient beliefs about their social role.

Up until then a clean and happy household, including the husband, went hand in hand with a successful and accomplished housewife. *This role identification is significantly connected with the apron- the emblem of domestic life.* [4]

This misbelief didn't unfortunately extinct, it kept reappearing through the decades and can be still spotted on the radar even today. But thankfully in a lower rate as women have gained the freedom to choose their path in society. As noted by Betty Friedan, in her book *The Feminine Mystique*, it was a common statement in the American society after the World War II that women were fulfilled through housework, sexual passivity and child rearing and "truly feminine" women had no wish for higher education or a career. Any opposing view led to theories involving mothers that chose to work and educate themselves end up raising miserable children.



Crowd Marching for Era Rally, August 26 1970

Female liberation is connected strongly with female beauty and it appears like women are its prisoners. This beauty can appear like poison translated as self-hatred, terror of aging and dread of lost control. In society it can appear as a political weapon against women. But in the male dominant

world it's not about women at all. *It's about men's institutions and institutional power.* [5]

At the same time it is shocking to realize this set up that has been made, making women believe and recreate for years a hatred amongst the generations. Older women should always envy the younger ones, they were made to believe that age makes them lesser than the other. At the same time younger women should fear the imposition of the elders. Yet again, it all revolves around male approval.

The beauty standards describe a specific behavior for women and not so much their actual appearance. Youth is the ultimate number one hit accompanied by fertility, innocence and sexual ignorance. If there is something that excites men, it is fetishizing about a clueless and vulnerable young woman that awaits them to discover the sexual new world. It must be a revival of their primal instincts, back when they again thought they ought to show women the world. Of course as the years pass the fetishizing list has been enriched and covers a broad range with types of innocence but also more powerful and dominatrix women.

The beauty myth was institutionalized in the past two decades as a transformer between women and public life. [6] The battle fields women have to travers are still numerous.

Despite how inferior men want to think of women, they started gaining their rights into a male dominant career world. This is still an ongoing war against many industries that insist on giving a different wage, less to women- more to men. Listing down discriminations against women's liberty and

development we see that women didn't get equal education and were not able to obtain a law degree until the late 1960's since they didn't have the freedom to speak their own mind even until the 1970's because some people felt that girls didn't have the brain capacity to obtain a higher education. Women were again not allowed to have a bank account or a credit card until 1970 without the permission of their husbands. And reaching to our present times women in South Arabia were not allowed to drive a car in public until 2018! Some will argue that the example of this country is an exception due to its general politics against female liberty but on a personal level I feel this is not enough of an argument. This for me is not an exception since in a western European country like Poland women are treated like slaves that are not able to control their own bodies when abortion is considered illegal.

Of course there is a tremendous list of things that apply differently for women than men that are still applied like the pink tax, that indicates that all products designed to be used by women can go up to 7 percent higher than the price men pay for all their lives.

IVi. Clothing and social class

The social challenge of clothing has many faces to show. No matter your field of expertise, the rules are more or less the same. Up to a level both men and women face the social judgment on their appearance. When mankind started using clothing as something more than a shield against weather conditions, it was the time textile art became a shifter of human appearance, always underlining that what you wear can be a factor of judgment.

Primarily social and economic reasons, directly place you in a specific social status in society. Brands play a significant role on adding prestige to the wearer. Even though it is not always necessary that the material of the garment will be of a very high quality, the mention of the brand itself is enough to make its quality distinguishable. *Conspicuous consumption composes a way for people to demonstrate their wealth, more specifically in this case, through what they wear.* [7]

In the meantime the brand also affects the wearer's characteristics such as 'richer' or 'poorer' and can also give a perception of competence ranking him hierarchically. It is alarming to realize that your character or education can hardly make an impact on your interlocutor's mindset, when first impressions based on one day's choice of clothing can erase possibilities on a conversation or a job opportunity. More importantly the system is training one generation after the other to judge, discriminate

and create bigots as an ongoing legacy.

"Social class theories are problematic for a number of reasons. They often conceptualize all classes as homogenous entities and do not adequately account for the disparities among different strata within a particular social class. These theories also tend to gloss over geographic variants of class manifestations, such as urban and rural areas. A host of other factors, such as gender, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, and even age or sexuality, further complicate the theories." [8]

The tendency of grouping people without considering any of their distinctive characteristics can be a profound capitalistic method of segregating populations. This method can be strategically linked to geographical, religious and race factors of supremacy.

This way of ranking a person, simply by what they wear, smells racism from a far and sets strong restrictions to the lower economic classes. It also creates the false need for overconsumption, giving the illusion that owning more or just specific types of products and clothing can change your perceived social class.

Social acceptance can purify an unrealistic crave for more. The pleasure we feel comes solely from being seen in a better way with the new attire, value for money or the functions of the product play no apparent role. Can clothes actually cut down my abilities on achieving my goals? The feeling of being accepted and included depends purely on superficial factors.

In a recent research from the University of Princeton, it was shown that a major part of population would label someone as 'rich' or 'poor' strictly based on a profound type of clothing based on a socially made up instinct. Automatically, one is trained to obtain positive feelings but also more respect towards a person who appears to have richer clothing. Even by knowing that this process is biased, the visual perception is so strongly rooted into the brain from a young age, making it very hard to pause and reform the thinking procedure.

Nowadays there is a whole "Dress for Success" campaign that indicates the dos and don'ts on a day of an interview or any other working day as a matter of fact. It is easily notable that the list regarding women's attires is longer than the one for men. The adjective used at the dos part, for almost every garment, without surprise, is 'conservative'.

It seems like any kind of professional needs to go through a type of moderation that will gradually confine her or him from major personality indicators. The method of downsizing your own personality, wearing specific types of clothing with neutral colors, is a technique aiming to help the candidate avoid having critiques other than their educational and professional backgrounds.

This approach at the same time, is somehow undermining, showing that the interviewer always has to be incapable of not being distracted by a colorful shirt or a pair of 'dangling earrings'. When in fact all those 'rules' are made up and enforced to population, making the interviewer a checker. Even

today only in a few countries we can see the beginning of a breakthrough in this pattern, allowing a person with tattoos or piercings to work in a conservative position of an office space. Braking little by little stereotypes, suggesting that people with the aforementioned characteristics or with a more loose appearance that would involve jewelry or high heels should not be narrowed down to specific professions as it was until now. Because so far, anyone's wish to wear colorful or sparkly items, would mean they are artists.

It feels like the restrictions for women are constantly stronger. Any type of tight piece of clothing that even slightly enhances the shape of the body is considered provocative. Transparency in fashion is marking a woman as of a lower class and limits her is specific professions. Skirt or shorts length play in the same pattern when at the same time one has to bare the indiscrete stare of condescending eyes. Large proportion of the female population is depending on a successful career both for their survival and for the satisfaction of their accomplishments.

There is a specific language one must excel and never deviate in order to merely consider climbing that success ladder. Occasionally that won't even be enough since women socially can be a subject to blame even by just existing in a world that some men still believe it belongs to them.

A woman must constantly prove that her social role is not restricted at home taking care of the household and children but it is in fact her own choice to choose for herself if she wants to pursue a career. If a woman raises her

voice in a workspace she is automatically 'hysterical' while with the slightest show of emotion she is 'incapable of handling tough situations'.

Men will try to find what may sabotage a woman's success, believing that they are superior to them and ultimately because they feel threatened just by undermining women's abilities. In the past, many assets that women brought on the work place were frowned upon and were actually used as a weapon against them. Multitasking, nurturing others and creating a sense of unity in the work group would backfire giving the impression of "the office mom".

Most of the days seemed like a lost case. But after forcing women that wanted to succeed, to wear a coldhearted and ruthless veil, their assets are, over a decade now, recognized and integrated with flying colors. In fact the former disapproving attitude of men forced women to learn to work harder, smarter and more efficiently than their male peers. Women were forced to believe that if they want 'game' they need to toughen up and learn how to play like the boys.

This even led the more 'sympathizing' men to mansplain the procedure through books like '*What men don't tell women about business: Opening Up the Heavily Guarded Alpha Male Playbook*' by Christopher Flett. Which is as a fact an offensive and undermining act. After analyzing tricks and techniques on how to behave like a male in order to be accepted, this author fairly admits: *If your goal is to succeed in business, you know you can accomplish a good deal on your own. However, to get to a new level and*

truly release your brilliance, you need to read this book and implement its advice. As Flett emphasizes, "You are an equal, but we cannot give it to you, you must claim it." [9]

IV ii. Clothing and Function

What is it that pushes us away from comfortable clothing and puts us in a forced restricted movement? The less productive a garment allowed you to be, the more it proved you belonged to the leisure class. As an example to this theory, the economist Thorstein Veblen would refer to the high heel, stating that "*the women's shoe adds the so called French heel to the evidence of enforced leisure afforded by its polish; because this heel obviously makes any, even the simplest and most necessary manual work extremely difficult*". [10]

Only to go on with his positions concerning women's corsets and men's ties to point out their restricted functional effect on people, serving a specific purpose, the one of class discrimination. Those might be obsolete appositions but frankly they are still present, just in disguise.

How clothing is worn is a matter of social norm. In many societies, a woman

wearing trousers was something one would never see. It was just in a few countries ago that this stopped being an issue. Over time those social 'rules' change and it is slowly getting common even for man to wear skirts. Nevertheless the prejudice around characterizing a woman according to the length of her skirt is still messing with people's minds.

The reasoning behind clothing is easily dragged away from comfort and functional ease and slides amongst marketing and psychology. It is a frequent event that fashion industry promotes clothing that restrict the levels of comfort and productivity. The garments we wear illustrate who we think we are, or who we want others to believe that we are. The fashion industry is linked to our psychology in a way we can't even imagine and bears the weight of social responsibility.

The industry is manipulating the consumer's needs implanting imaginary competitions in their heads and feeds the illusion of social climbing. Marketing plays tricks on their emotions to persuade them on purchasing things. Taking it a step further, research shows that the brain finds pleasure in excessive shopping even of inexpensive things, following the dogma of 'the more, the merrier'. This creates a loophole amongst 'rich' and 'poor' shopping and idolizes the action of shopping itself. *Consumers run the risk of ending up on a hedonic treadmill in which the continuous pursuit of new stuff leaves them unhappy and unfulfilled.* [11]

Psychologists claim that this destructive overconsumption can be reversed with their help, starting by targeting the actual needs of population and in this way reducing land fields of waste.

According to Knight Dunlap, an American psychologist and his writings in 'The development and function of Clothing', there are four important theories as to the origins of clothing. Number one would be *The modesty theory*.

This one goes back to the times of Adam and Eve stating that clothing was meant to conceal the genital organs preventing in this way any sense of sexual emotion, embarrassment or shame. Later on, the covering of the body parts for the same reasons grew larger as the modesty rules took different dimensions.

This theory is strongly linked to morality and how one can see fashion following the ethics of their times. The socially acceptable fashion rules depend on numerous factors that mostly tend to serve the fashion industry and appease the momentum of the flock. Unfortunately people that dare to think and express themselves differently are frowned upon by the dominant conservative part of the so called progressive societies. The modesty rules have turned this planet into a hostile place, mostly for women that choose not to be objectified by ill-formed prejudice.

Seconding comes *The immodesty theory*. Here we meet the opposing theory stating that people first started wearing clothes that drew attention

to the reproductive organs, rather than conceal them, and therefore also seen as *The theory of sexual attraction*. It was widely spread by Havelock Ellis, a writer and progressive intellectual that emphasized in human sexuality. Clothing is actually promoting that the wearer should attract sexual interest since partial concealment in creating an exciting and luring mystery. In addition they are a statement of self expression and can indicate the prestige one chooses to give to themselves.

In many societies sexuality is not a taboo matter and people are more open about their preferences and expressive means. It can be seen like this theory treats the human body as a temple that needs to be cherished as our vessel to life and if wished, reproduction.

Coming third is *The adornment theory*. In this case clothing doesn't appear to have any deeper meaning other than a simple ornamenting functionality. It is presented as a tool to draw attention or display excellence without any ultimate goal. It fully depends on the wearer's style and appreciation of function and again on how they want to be presented in the world filtered by the dominant trends of the time being.

No matter how hard we believe that we are the masters of our choices on what lies in our closets, the truth is it is very hard to deviate from the trends simply by their over ruling the markets. Even the more alternative choices that seem to be at their pick, are somewhat defined by fashion and the circular reappearance.

Lastly, *The utility, or protection theory*. The fourth theory is aiming more practically, proposing that the ultimate goal of clothing was nothing more than to protect humans from external factors and elements of the nature such as weather conditions and even protection against animals. Soon enough mankind realized that instead of being adrift, they could actually minimize pain, coldness or heat with the proper usage of garments. In this category people get a better chance against injuries of minor scale that can easily be prevented by simple clothes. So in reality they function as an actual shield.

Regardless, most of the theories have proven some strong points of liability and have been the dominant perception, solely or coexisting, at one time or another. Clothing forms a non-verbal communication that more or less depends on the experiences and background of the receiver for the type of characterizing one will get.

It is interesting to notice how the most extreme and fanatic opinions on disciplinarian dress codes and behaviors are usually linked to societies with strong enforcement of religion and conservative politics. Enforcement of restrictions on these matters usually pass to the jurisdiction of the thumbnail of society, the family. The argument of prudent parents lies on media trying to influence their daughters against being dressed with revealing clothing. Their biggest weapon on that is modesty and constraint while in fact if accepting body parts were nothing more than just body parts, no one would need to be suppressed.

IViii. "You're a doll"

Shaping the minds of the new generations is the most important aspect in the development of any society that values evolution.

Researchers discovered that feelings of self-objectification, body shame, body dissatisfaction, and negative mood increased after women wore revealing clothing, as opposed to more modest dress. This idea is something that we need to address because women are worth infinitely more than the sum of their body parts. [12]

This statement coming from the mouth of a conservative parent should actually be alarming. Alarming because indeed women and any human being is worth more than any of their body parts but this statement again comes with a false initiative. What society continues to do in the wrong way is to only point the finger and blame the victim and still doesn't understand that if we properly educate the offender, we would probably be one step closer to eliminating situations like those.

The continuation of this behavior is actually keeping us back instead of evolving us as human beings. Living in an era where vocalizing offences is commonly allowed and rarely judged is dangerous. Yet this phenomenon was always there but only over the past years women found the courage to openly talk about the molestation they have been through. In every family or group of friends there is more than one female that has faced a harassment or fear for her safety at one point or another in her life.

It all starts from education and culture. After birth, and as soon as females develop consciousness, they are nurtured as if it always lies on their feet to control how the males will behave towards them. Growing up, I and many of my female friends, would always hear 'Girls, boys don't mature as fast as you, cut them some slack, be patient and make allowances for them'. And it is kind of funny because we never heard adults say 'Boys, girls mature faster than you, make sure to look at them as examples of leadership and intelligence'.

This segregation on girls and boys abilities goes on to the fashion industry as well, considering how encouraging and motivational are the sayings on boys t-shirts while girl's clothing mostly emphasize on the quote 'You're a doll'. In the end of the day it's all about setting examples. We definitely don't live in the '50s no more so young girls are not constrained at home, learning how to knit but some different level of belittlement is still present. The upbringing of a child plays a significant role to forming the future self so we need to choose what we want to teach to our girls, encouragement or indulgence. The ultimate lesson we need to teach our sons though is respect an equality.

Furthermore there are even assigned colors for each gender. In the 19th century pastel colors started being popular for babies. Girls were associated to pink since it is closer to red, that is considered to be a more romantic color and women are thought to be more emotional. There was a small break through by the 1960's when the gendered colors were excluded as a social norm through the women's liberation but prenatal testing helped retailers capitalize specific colors for each gender. The color stereotype dictates that babies are supposed to grow into a specific role and that you

are allowed to claim only one of the two genders. Being on pink team means you have to be girly, if a girl likes blue that makes her a tomboy that is incapable of being a proper lady. If though you are a boy that likes pink then you aren't manly enough.

Coming up next is the teenage years, where everything gets more serious. It's when we are taught that teenage boys treat girls mean just because they like them. At that point of age, teens tend to discover their changing bodies and sexuality. It is also the point they start noticing evolution on the opposite sex and discover attraction. Prejudice from family, society and religion are the mind shaping factors, filtering the thoughts and ways of expression of youths and sneak their way through their minds to set a base of disrespectful communication. There is a dangerous line of thinking implying that girls are always to blame in terms of following rules and discipline by restrictive dress codes when in contrary, boys are allowed much more freedom. On top of all the guidelines, girls also seem to be responsible to not distract the boys, an act that justifies the criticism they might get and is a form of victim blaming.

A study in 1998 proved a correlation between 'self-objectification and shame and anxiety in girls' in which young students were made to complete a math's test while either wearing swimsuits or sweaters.

Even though each group took the test in separate rooms, girls wearing swimsuits performed worse than the girls in sweaters. Results among the cohort of boys, however, showed no difference in performance regardless of their attire.

This can be a perfect example to show how deeply the criticizing system has gotten under our skin. Societies are fixated on women's looks and it starts by teaching teenagers to judge the female purity by their choices on clothing. We carry the burden of filling the heads of some with hatred and at the same time, the souls of others with fear. The choice of clothing is part of a person's personal liberty and somehow some have the epiphany to infuse teenage minds with hurtful judgment instead of respect to all human beings. The question thought remains the same. How can a short skirt or a tight top affect any quality or characteristics of a person?

The results of numerous psychological researches are bringing very unpleasant results in the light of day, pointing out that the tendency to criticism is subconsciously 'addictive'. One of the most distinctive example comes from a school in Hamburg exposing human shallowness by creating a measurement for woman worth. The image literally shows female legs with a scale marking that the longest the fabric the more prude she is, while the shorter the fabric the more of a slut or a whore she is. Verbal assaults can also be brutal and life wrecking for humans of any age and sex and the error in this line of thinking is somewhat absurd. In school environments this phenomenon spreads like a plague with no distinction on boys, girls or even teachers, preventing any other voice to be heard. It's harder for one voice to oppose to a mass 'attack' because this indicates the next victim. This is again when a proper education shines by its absence.



Terre Des Femmes, Hamburg 1981

As women reach around the age of 30 the battlefield awaits with new enemies. A young lady should look naïve, pure, always in perfection, not too modest, not exposing her body parts, nor too skinny or too fat, ready for a family, and the list of required qualities is never ending. It feels like a speedy judgment game in the name of propriety. Apart from the low class qualities clothing can give to women, it is commonly perceived that the reason to her choice is attention seeking, usually in a sexually related way. A woman's need to get dressed starts from comfort and comfort is shaped through various factors, but they are mostly personal expressive means that lie solely on the wearer.

This criticism is based on a woman not complying with the expectations of others regarding her behavior and appearance and is called slut-shaming.

Clothing is not the only reason a female can be slut-shamed for but under this term, a female oddity can also be accused when in request for birth control pills, being open with her premarital sex life, and even victim-blamed after a sexual assault. It is most commonly heard from men to women and quite rarely referred to men, but unfortunately it is often used from women to women. The prejudice regarding slut-shaming lies deep inside most societies without ever having a documentation of its origin. It had existed for ages and it draws its sources from social and cultural relations as well as from how one complies with the boundaries of the considered appropriate and acceptable behavior.

Being slut-shamed by a woman comes from a combination of filters implied by the society and a big part may derive from insecurities of the inner shelf. Those two are correlative since our personal beliefs depend on the culture we live in and embrace. The virtue of filtering our cultural influences starts from working towards the change of our own behavior and by recognizing and rejecting those thoughts we chart the way to deflect slut-shaming in words and actions. But it also comes from incriminating our body parts, clothing choices, sexual expressions and our position in society.

It is by now overly stated that women should not be ashamed for enjoying sex even when it is premarital or with multiple partners. Women get shamed for being ugly, being too pretty, naked, masturbating, and they get shamed by other women and even themselves. They even feel shame when they are victimized after a sexual assault so they would rather carry that

burden hidden, than get socially exposed to shame and criticism since it would put to jeopardy their social standing.

The disturbing aspect is that most of us have done it at one point or another, or have participated in a slut-shaming conversation as it is short of a habit implanted in our mindset. It can easily be considered as a normal thing to do and we can act on it without even consciously noticing it. *People who feel shame sometimes engage in self- destructive behavior, and they sometimes engage in aggressive behavior toward others.* [13]

The constant battle of self-acceptance is a shape shifter that may ultimately lead to alienation and ostracize human solidarity.

In the contemporary world, a teenager's or a grown up woman's nightmare is to be slut-shamed on the internet. This threat starts from criticizing old pictures of the victim and extend up to taking new images or videos without the victim's knowledge or approval and publicly humiliate them of their choices and actions. This technique targets to the exposure of a socially unacceptable act or appearance to others, involving friends and family and aims to psychological precipitation. *The action of slut-shaming can be considered to be a form of social punishment and is an aspect of sexism, as well as female intersexual competition.* [14] The whole act is about control, once someone has a picture of you that can be in any way shameful they can manipulate and threaten you to please some demands. Even if you do it is quite likely the picture will end up 'ruining' your social life.

Under this category, an offender's choice varies from shaming a person about their age (ageism) or their body type (fat-shaming) and generally actions that don't comply with their perception of being. The reasons a woman can be judged for are countless and quite controversial since she could be criticized for both sides of the same coin. *"Slut" is simply a misogynistic catch-all, a verbal utility knife that young people use to control women and create hierarchies. There may be no real sluts, in other words, but there are real and devastating consequences to slut-shaming.* [15]

When a woman goes over the age of fifty, society makes her, so far, feel that she is excluded from the game of beauty and male gaze. Beauty stereotypes come in brutally waving ageism in the air. Given the strong focus culture gives to appearance, especially on females, and the relation between youth and beauty, it is highly possible for an older woman to think negatively about herself after reaching a certain age. *Social expectancy theory posits that cultural values shape how individuals perceive and evaluate others, and this influences how others evaluate themselves.* [16]

The body and facial characteristic standards are deeply rooted in the western culture so women at any age that deviate from the given range tend to experience social exclusion. Lower body esteem either already exists or is created by the coming of age and is commonly associated with low psychological self-esteem.

When an older woman separates her self from ageism and appears as a more confident character of the norm, that may be connected with activities

with exposure of body parts or even a dressing code that does not hide but underlines the body, she is once more covered in shame. Overall society tends to treat adults over fifty with neglect, as if they were invisible, but when it comes to female beauty standards it stands by its grounds. The fashion industry shows an obsession with youthfulness and contributes to a negative stigma towards getting older. This categorization based on age influences the perception we form about others in a more general sense how we treat them.

Once more the difference in characterizing a middle aged man and a middle aged woman is separable. Men of age are frequently distinguished, with charmingly handsome grey hair or wise, while women must struggle with ageism and sexism. Women are only allowed to look old if they follow a form that makes them look a certain way, constantly trying to take some years off and living in fear they might be replaced with a younger model.

It's only recently that advertisements and some fashion companies started shifting their attitude in order to increase visibility on how older women actually look like. Businesses found that there is commercial value behind providing an actual representation of each age bracket. The social media played a significant role in this case since they pointed out that the fashion industry ought to update its narrow beauty ideas.

Even though it is a capitalized asset we can still consider it a small win towards real representation of a certain age group that was invisible up until recently.

V. Portraying the female

Globally, daily, women are still subject to victim-blaming, criticism, slut-shaming, harassment and even punishment for the clothes they wear.

In Western culture, girls' clothing is created to mimic women's trends and often have 'sexualizing features', including emphasizing 'sexualized body parts', teaching them from a young age that their body's worth is down to how appealing they look. [17]

In many, non- western countries, any attempt to look or behave like a westerner might lead to an assault that will eventually be justified. In those terms, being from the west is equivalent with being provocative, or 'looking for it' and any opposing behaviors aim to alter their traditions. Countries like this are usually strongly connected to a religion that continues to undermine the position of women even on the 21st century.

But even during an event on personal safety in a university in western and progressive Canada in 2011 the approach was once more putting the blame on women. *"I've been told I'm not supposed to say this – however, women should avoid dressing like sluts in order not to be victimized."* [17]

My personal experience on acknowledging my gender simply started by realizing the effect of the male gaze. Growing up with some scars on my body didn't seem problematic at first but when puberty came along it seemed to set the ground for stares that created an intensified discomfort. This just led me to completely change my attitude towards my dress code. But what caught me off guard and confused me was that just by addressing

my discomfort to fellow teenagers I got a judgmental and shameful statement, "If you don't like the looks, change what you wear!"

Naturally I couldn't see it then but what was voiced through a teenager encapsulated the systematic oppression that blames the victim and not the rapist.

Vi. Forms of Femininity

Gender wise both sexes need to obey to some rules. The 'how to male, instruction book' given at birth, indicates a manly and possessively patriarchal behavior that a boy is not allowed to deviate from. In most societies there are guidelines or even unwritten rules of what is considered appropriate to be worn by each gender. Throughout history although and even more in modern times we cross upon the phenomenon of cross-dressing.

This term refers to the act of one wearing clothes that are not commonly associated with their sex. Reportedly this started appearing in comedy, when women were not allowed to perform and male actors had to play both

gender roles, but also emerged from women dressed as men in order to secretly go to war and men dressing as women to avoid going at war. Despite that it also appears in some cultures as part of ceremonial traditions and religions.

It generally seemed as a solution for women because looking like a man meant they could momentarily have the liberty of living an adventurous life without having to ask for permission to do as they wish. On the other hand, men dressing as women was viewed negatively and where often linked to exhibitionism, perversion, sexual deviation and homosexuality.

Men dressing as women can be found both in heterosexual or homosexual males that come to a revelation when they let loose of their enforced restrictions and express their feminine side. There are many occasions of men identifying as cross-dressers for decades even when they are married to women. They have created a complete persona with habits and a name and a big amount of of the wives were accepting or being tolerant with their activity.

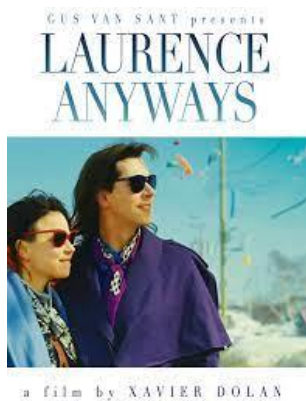
For the wives opposed to the cross-dressing husband, number one fear was having society find out about the husband's activities, followed by the feeling of betrayal. It is the image of authority, conqueror's prestige and masculinity that is shattered and marks the failure of their manhood in the eyes of many. Simply by being opposed to the dominant 'normality'.

Yet again, it is the time a person wishes to be the gender they feel curious, excited and might even admire and feel more comfortable in but society is trying to reject men that deviate from their gender assigned role. Cross-dressing is not as stigmatized as it used to be and thankfully countries like Thailand are fully embracing it as an essentially reasonable way of self-expression. Today, cross-dressing is more publicly present due to drag shows that recently managed to get accepted by show biz.

Specific items of clothing are again the target, a woman can wear pants without them being characterized as a male garment no more but males can't wear a skirt or a dress in public and are, furthermore frowned upon when wearing pink pants or a bright orange jacket. The fashion industry creates a mesmerizing effect on viewers by delicate tactility and designs that can make anyone feel divine and men should have the liberty of admiring themselves on the mirror wearing that outfit.

A cinematic example is set in the movie *Laurence Anyways* by the Canadian director Xavier Dolan when a heterosexual male, happily married professor expresses his desire to dress in woman's clothes and also identify as one without implying he is attracted to men.

The plot features the struggles the couple has to go through with the immersive redefying genders but also points out how unprepared society is to accept anything considered out of the norm.



Movie poster and still image from movie, 2012

It was for me the first time to witness the portrayal of the person undergoing the change of their gender identity and how challenging it is to try to repeatedly prove they are not an elephant.

Nowadays drag queens, mostly associated to the gay culture, are fashionably creating entertainment events-balls that advocate their exaggerated self-expression of their female versions. A person doing drag, with the usage of make-up, clothes and wigs, may be a man or a woman- so referred to as drag king or queen and vary in culture, type, professionally acting in drag or occasional performers.

The drag balls first appeared in the U.S.A. in the 1880s' by William Dorsey Swann. Originally the partakers were formerly enslaved, as was Swann, and the balls were often raged by the police leading to Swann's arrest in 1896 with the accusation of 'keeping a disorderly house'.

The theme of those balls varied drawing its' first inspiration from a form of racist entertainment called minstrelsy that was popular in the 19th century. Soon enough that changed into imitating 'prima donnas', a popular theme in both European and American cross-dressing shows appearing similar to Shakespearean actors or castrati. The first era of female impersonation was soon enough associated with comedy, dance and music and lives by them until today.

After the mid-1900s female impersonation became a synonym to the LGBTQ community and was forced to live in disreputable parts of San Francisco. Being in drag in those clubs was a getaway for gay men to feel free and accepted by a community. But especially after the 1950s' the community became slowly more accepted with the help of entertainment industry by including female impersonators in shows.

Vii. "The Trinity of Trash"

Moving to 1970's when American filmmaker, actor, writer and artist John Waters, still active until today, set off his carrier with a trilogy that shook every household in America. "The Trinity of Trash" refers to the movies "Pink Flamingos", "Female Trouble" and "Desperate Living".

According to one of his interviews he is 'Just trying to show people a good time, make them laugh and give them a little shock value for their money's worth.'* Waters created gore amateur underground movies with his friend Harris Glenn Milstead that later on came to become the drag persona Divine and slowly adding the rest of the cast that would mark his filmography. In some way John Waters and Frank Wedekind both showed how they thought of life with no holdbacks, refusing to be censored by the public conservatism and magnified situations in their work as a mechanism against the norm.



The Trinity of Thrash- movie posters

His films were consisted by queer artists and Divine was like a muse for him, setting a good ground base for vulgarity and trash. She is all that drag queens ever desired and all characters shamelessly pursue whatever brings them pleasure. These provoking underground rebellions aim primarily to entertain themselves but make also a strong statement against mainstream society. The purely amusing part is that they were totally unconcerned for the approval of the rest of the world and this is in my eyes very similar to how Wedekind led his lifework.

We witness the incarnation of bold filthiness with no shame. Waters encourages through his films, to take your chances with adventure and the excitement of pushing situations to the edge. Each of his films was opposed to everything characterized as 'good taste' and the 'values' those people had where the complete opposite to anything even close to mainstream society leaving conservatism out of the equation.

Personally I believe that his depiction of rebellious revulsion is even today considered provocative, followed by a delirium of insanity acts that create hilarious moments. The movies are very much inappropriate for easily offended audiences since they exceed the limits of decency and promote a vulgar lifestyle. Water's style of making movies was the first to break the rules of the film industry since he wrote, produced and directed and was personally involved in every part of it, an attitude that was not commonly seen. Thus generates a devotion to his work similar to the one of Wedekind.

Divine and Lulu are two personas under a public decrial for their actions but they never seem to show any regret for their actions. The first seems to enjoy the building up of her title as Icon of Trash Cinema, while the other one seems simply unbothered and carries on with the pattern of wife she has created.

Wedekind and Waters may differ in many aspects, from writing styles to approach of art but both promote liberation of the minds, buck against the system and drew power from the shock they provoke to live up to their cause.

Viii. Famous paintings of the past

Depiction of the naked human body has existed from prehistoric representations on the walls of caves and prehistoric statuary. Even though the most popular portrayal used to be by the male nude body, the tendency has now changed by far and the ultimate muse in art is now the female body.

The 'othering' of the nude as a mythological being became a convenient way for artists to overtly sexualize the nude for the male gaze; a painting

of nudes were created for the 'ideal spectator' who was always regarded as men, the depiction of women was always a device to please him.

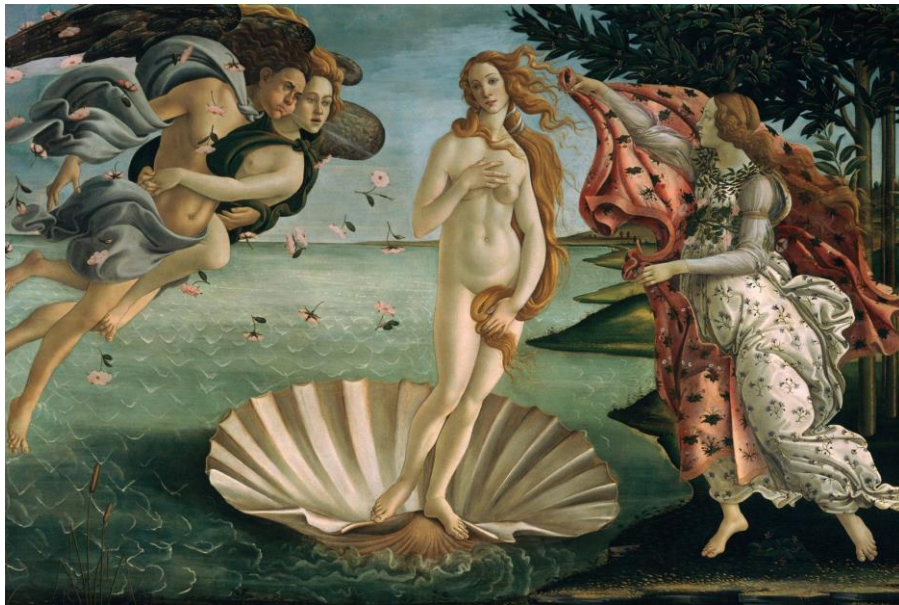
The stark contrast of color between Venus's body and the luscious fabric underneath her as well as the burgundy drapery, the 'suggestive' pose, the voluptuous curves, the languid pose and the mirror all feed in to the element of Venus as an 'object of desire', depicted for the pleasure of men. [18]



The toilet of Venus, Diego Velazquez, 1647-51

The first form of 'pornographic' material came through paintings and later on still photography. The primary subject was women posing merely or fully undressed in a sensual pose that would serve the male viewer. The natural inequality the male gaze contains can be attributed to patriarchy and its amersion to the female body. Male gaze refers to the sexual politics of the gaze and indicates the empowering men draw from it, enhancing the objectification of women.

Artists in the 16th century started revealing parts of the body in their paintings or sculptors to arouse the viewer's thought. Most of the time the aforementioned art had to be draped with just a few exceptions that served private viewings. One of them was "The birth of Venus" (1486) by Sandro Botticelli portraying the mythological goddess of beauty and sex, Venus, emerging from the sea and floating on a shell accompanied by nymphs.



The Birth of Venus, Sandro Botticelli, 1486

The nude body was used in Gothic and Early Renaissance art to indicate shame, vice or sin and Botticelli was the one to alter the symbolism of nudity in a way that is more blissful and by adding a confident gaze, giving it a sexualized twist.

Simply by observing art evolution we get an image of how society treated on each era morality, sex, beauty standards, gender ideals or even national identity. Gradually nude paintings where not a rare find and their creation and acquire became more and more the ultimate goal. From romanticized erotic poses it escalated to more explicit scenes that aimed to please

masculine voyeurism. Soon it expanded to printing and photography, means that made it even more accessible but in the meanwhile the stigma following the women that posed intensified. The photographic recording creates a fresh eye in seeing that falsely promises more to the viewer due to its vividness but eventually shows less than expected.

Most of the times it was dancers, actresses or singers that posed in more explicit pictures on the side from their *carte de visit* but that would indicate their belittlement from mainstream society. They would automatically be characterized as prostitutes and with low moral standards. The sub-genre of eroticism found in nude photography is liked with the female spectacle for the heterosexual male desire.



Left: Reclining Nude, Julien Vallou de Villeneuve, 1851

Right: Female nude, Guglielmo Plüschow, 1890

The objectification of the female nude body derives from the way the painter or photographer points his view against her, how he chooses to show her stand and act, in what background and with what props. Foremost it is the

way she is dictated to play a role that gives the male full control, what she represents and how will she provoke lust in her viewers.

Due to the prudish society, erotic photography was strictly censored in the mid-20th century and visual media of the time camouflaged them as of an artistic interest. This movement de-demonized nudity and gave a chance to photography to flourish in realism, surrealism and formalistic style.

Today pornographic photography is lacking of artistic value and faces a constant social debate. Even though denomination of women working on the industry is still an issue, there have been improvements in many countries allowing more people to exist in the profession.

There shouldn't be shame in the act of posing as long as the objectification of women is abolished. Thankfully there is a notable amount of erotic/pornographic material that is directed by women and can provide a result that is respectful to both genders and their equal pleasure.

VI. My analysis of the text

In a quite contradictory matrimony of characters, Wedekind manages once more to erupt reactions from a society already in aversion to anything exceeding the moral rules. What he chooses to portray are characters that he has most likely encountered, and describes situations that are quite close to his personal experiences, considering the testimonies on his lavishing lifestyle.

Source texts for Lulu are Frank Wedekind's two plays, Earth Spirit (1895) and Pandora's Box (1904), about the femme fatale Lulu and her entourage of admirers, pimps, patrons, clients and husbands, including (among others) a portrait painter of uncertain sexuality, a father and son, and a lesbian countess. [19]

Every era or region has its marginalized categories of people and this makes this play extremely adaptable in any time frame. As society craves to point the finger and contempt Asians, Jews or queers, it also has its all-time classical favorite victims of judgment, women.

The jackpot combo is a young beautiful lady from a poor and shady background that is confident about her looks and isn't afraid to show it. It is then mathematically certain she will be frowned upon and face constant monitoring for any misconduct.

Throughout the play a personal observation lies with surprise on the fact that there is no sign of Lulu having any guilt or introversion considering the constant rumors about her. At the same time she seems unable to repel the men she attracts leaving the impression of a complete surrender on their mercy. Lulu is in constant need of being in a marriage, this way she would have someone to look after her, since she never had this security as a child.

The depiction of each and every marriage though is a sign of the patriarchal overruling, contributing to her public slander given that she is never defended by any of her husbands. On the contrary, she is accused for their choices.

In both of her two first marriages she appears unhappy and barely stands the presence of her husbands but at the same time her hands are tied. Throughout the play she is presented completely codependent by the men in her life even though she was never subjugated to any of them. Despite of presenting a free and untamed spirit she may have also used her charming appearance as a tool to have men provide her the life that she wished.

Women's liberation was already present by the late 1800s forming the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1869, but up until then not all women pursued the equality of the sexes and weren't confident enough to take life in their own hands, a fact that unfortunately is valid until today. When complying with traditional gender roles, some more traditional women would defend that politics were improper for women and most

likely felt challenged by the struggle for political, social and economic equality.

The reasons behind Lulu's dependence on her husband's may vary but her upbringing environment in combination to sociopolitical factors of the time play a significant role. Lulu embodies moreover a clear female sexuality, compared to the femme fatal tradition, in a quest for revenge in the masculine world.

In that sense, what was seemingly a helpless creature seeking for an anchor could be just a subtle scheme from Wedekind, serving female liberation. Her morality follows its own norm that is completely detached from the limitations set by the bourgeois society. The innocent characteristics are also her true self because simply a woman isn't one or the other, but Lulu is multilayered and is an oddity that defies specifications.

According to the introduction of 'Lulu' adapted by Nikolas Wright, in order to enhance his research, Wedekind, came in sexual contact with a number of prostitutes. By this technique he put together qualities and flaws of women he encountered with that were known for being devious, manic, irresistible, fierce and honest, but all doomed. The level of how condemned they are, meaning Lulu, is incarnated by Jack the Ripper.

Given some of her characteristics it is quite possible that Lulu was a victim of sexual abuse in a young age likely by a close member of her family,

giving her a damaged-child syndrome. Those scars leave a strong trace in every one of her marriages and the apathy in which she reacts to situations like death, threats and austerity. The sexualized relationships she enters in connection with her traumas give a distorted view on what should be considered normal and acceptable in a relationship.

Her charm and beauty automatically transform to her weapons, seeing that she attracts men from diverse status, and allows her to use them to her wishes, while they still think they are in control. She is very capable to impersonate the ideal wife each husband wants and enhance in that way their ego. Her husband's seem to have a preference into changing her name as if in this way they can sculpt her to whatever they want. This act, in my opinion, is a trigger to wonder. Who is the real Lulu after all?

Lulu is presenting a natural sexual appetite that unfortunately for her, is in averse to society grain. Her second marriage could be a rather healthy environment but it seems to dramatically bore her thus she seeks excitement and danger through her affair with Schön. If the protagonist of this play was a man none of it would have been a big deal because it is still ok for men to be driven by sexual desires but women aren't supposed to have any. She is judged for simply acting the way a man would, by gaining power from her admirers and enslaving them with her sexual desire.

It is unfortunately more than disturbing to admit that after a hundred years and more the power men believe to have over women hasn't been eliminated even in the biggest cities of the most advanced countries.

Frank Wedekind was well aware of the restrictions a woman of the time had to endure. The shock his writings brought to society aimed to tingle the minds of the middle class. Willingly or not, by this play he dove down to the core of how women are represented as a gender and what affect a sexual trauma can have in a woman's sexual relationships. Female stereotypes determine that in order to get what she wants, a woman will use her sexual allure in order to influence a man into going her way. But never treats men in the same way.

Society teaches us from a young age through storybooks that a woman's role is inferior and the man is the powerful character of the story coming to her rescue. Culture of the western world has made improvements but should be even more oriented into change.

Wedekind brings an essentially new sexual morality that intended to puzzle many but also regenerate mankind and drama in the age of decadence.

He continues his allegory in the second book, Pandora's Box indicating that Lulu is a force and by the name Pandora links her to evil. There is a socio economic delirium slow burning, reminiscent of stock market bubbles.

The setting in Paris is sternly contradictory showing their degradation amongst a group of dubious status. They endeavor with actions of economic fraud and we already taste a big change to her persona. Rather than a femme fatal she is presented as a shadow of her old self struggling to make ends meet.

The ending scene in Paris is marked by a twist predicting her mortality. Fear has overruled her and all point to an unpreventable disaster. Her schemes have disappeared giving all space to the survival mode and prepare us for the transition to their escape to London.

The only sparkle in that wretched attic is the only thing reminding the past glories, her dazzling portrait. In a quite common way for Wedekind, the climax comes by murder, suicide, poverty and death by an absurd new character.

The beauty myth and it's restrictions after all those years have created a wave of reactions with bold assertions from both women and men. It feels like it is finally the time to take back all the lost years in oppression and express each need of sexuality in excess. It appears to be the time that repressed oddities should no longer hide but shield up with a little bit of 'Lulu attitude' and simply not care about biased critiques.

After all those years of deprived freedom, I can't help but wonder, is anyone to blame 'Lulu' for her actions?

VII. Character description

The development of the character of Lulu hides in my eyes many levels of personalities that are agelessly present until today. Women subjectively where forced to believe that in order to survive they needed to be by the side of the alpha male. That was the beginning of female subjugation.

However in the case of our protagonist, each situation she faces seems to be a different challenge in need of specific handling. But she doesn't seem to care about performing other than the bare minimum and present herself as his appropriate wife. Every person regardless of age, color or body shape could, in one way, be in her position and still be faced as a craved trophy. Most of the times she is presented to be adrift by the men surrounding and defying her life course. The act of shaming gives the shamer the expectation that the person receiving the shame will feel embarrassed and inferior but if that is not the case then the shamer strikes back with more aggressiveness.

Her impact is from the beginning pure and she stands truly to herself, even though she is assumingly in an age and faze of life, still exploring her personality. But again women didn't have a chance or time for recreational pursuit since that would be a deviation from being a wife. Lulu is by definition a trophy wife that everyone has to win for reasons that shift around the husband's personal success.

In an attempt to show the diversity of this character but at the same time how 'shapeless' slut-shaming is I chose to show different versions of Lulu to depict different stages of her life. Society continues to show a bad face to any being that doesn't comply with the social norm. In this case, society acted the same way presenting Lulu as the source of all female evil, luring men and leading them to their destruction like a spider-woman.

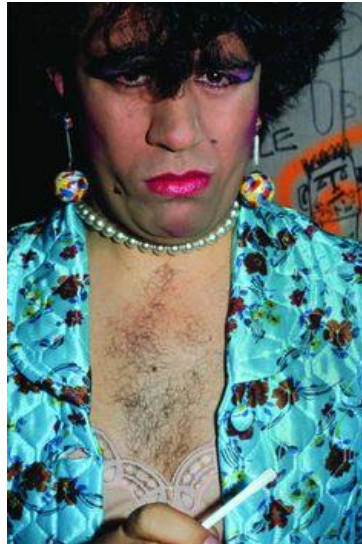
Starting from an unspecified but obviously young age we firstly meet Lulu, the wife of Dr Goll. Depiction of a young, naïve and innocent looking lady.

She is a bit lost and in need of an anchor in life. But does she truly? Her eyes tell tales of fire. She is shown in a way that any men's magazine would fetishize her, depicting her as the ultimate jewelry of purity.

The age difference of the couple is a true red flag showing a big compromise on the wife's end caused by socioeconomic factors. Dr. Goll treats her as a doll, chooses to call her by another name than her own and shows his obsession with her wearing specific clothing. No one else is allowed to play with his toy and she is to be loyal and obedient to his wishes. Despite the young of her age her temper can't be tampered and her vivid nature is visible anywhere she goes. Fortunately, the doctor dies the minute he suspects that someone else might have messed up with his toy.

Subsequently she takes the role of a painter's muse, named Schwartz. Seemingly spiritless in this partnership, or just the object of someone else's success. This fact cannot be unseen. From that point on she is again like a

trophy, a puppet for the painter that is blind drunk from a success deriving directly from her being.



Inspirational Reference

In her shoes could be anyone that catches the eye of the audience and is interesting enough to keep up the attention. She again found herself in this role of a wife unable to act differently due to society rules. While being in her first marriage her dignity was exposed by the lust of the painter doing her portrait causing the death of her husband. Fine society would dictate her to marry that man otherwise she would be singled out.

Moving on to Lulu, wife of her savior, Schön. Finally in the arms of her life protector or as a father figure she never had, objectified by him and at the same time presented as evil, the cause of Schön's misery. It is unspecified under what conditions he saved her and what was his part on her first

marriage with a quite older man than her. It is here when for the first time she seems to be in a place by her own will.



Inspirational Reference

Even from before their wedded life, Schön was accusing her for simply expressing her wish to be with him. His outburst indicates a pattern followed by her husbands that are driven mad from jealousy and are presented in the verge of a mental breakdown. She is again presented unimpaired by their deaths or accusations and mostly troubled with the outcome of her personal life path. Her survivor is a priority that guides her actions since the only path she knows is in being by the side of someone. By killing this husband she proves that she separates herself from their madness.

Lulu, wife of her savior's son, Alwa. Escaping and living a luxurious life in Paris like a bounced cheque. Constantly living in fear of her past being

revealed by lurking danger. Her short experience in prison is hunting her and this makes her an easy victim for men that distract ransom in order to preserve her freedom. In this marriage she is not accused of manipulating anyone. The survival mode is on but overworked and in despair.



Inspirational Reference

Not only the threats of the past but, as a prediction for the future, one of the men threatening her wishes to send her in a brothel in Cairo. Despite the mess they live in, one can admit that she is again in a marriage of her choice but not with the outcome she hoped for.

Lulu, the prostitute in the streets of London. The survivor. Fate is shaping a hard path for them with Lulu being a sex worker and the only provider of the shady attic they call home. The group is solely depending on her, a role she is not usually seen in but yet again she can transform into the new

scenario. Going down the path of prostitution, even though she has been called a whore behind closed curtains before, she seems to struggle to find her ways through it. Her coming of age is for the first time seen so profoundly on her and builds up her rich character.



Inspirational Reference

VIII. Costumes

Lulu possesses every possible expression of femininity and at the same time bears all the prejudice a woman can face. The versions of her that are for me more intriguing and have a social spotlight on them, were documented in a stylized photo shooting in the streets of Prague in November 2021.

This improvised act functioned as a social experiment that drew the attention of passersby, allured their curiosity and in some cases evoked hostility. Many were that cases though of support and unconditional offer of services for the purposes of my Master Thesis.

The selection of the costumes serve a future proof character with elements that could exist in fashion from the 1940s' until present times. I chose to use many layers on the models in a way that would amplify the quality of the costume and also emphasize on the multilayered character of the protagonist with an erotic touch.

All act in the name of Lulu, Ellie or Lily and recite their monologues about their load of shame. They do so not with spoken words but by exposing themselves to the lens, posing, provoking or just simply sitting.

Inspired by Lulu on her first and second marriage





Inspired by Lulu during her fourth marriage





Inspired by Lulu on her fifth and last marriage



IX. Visual Interpretation

For the staging of this documentation I chose the space of Divadlo X10. This venue is for me ideal since it provides a non-strictly theatrical space, and thus could theoretically host a staged documentation project as the aforementioned. The outworn walls and overall naked concrete esthetics create a cold and unhospitable atmosphere that accompanies ideally the aftermath of the experiences women endure.

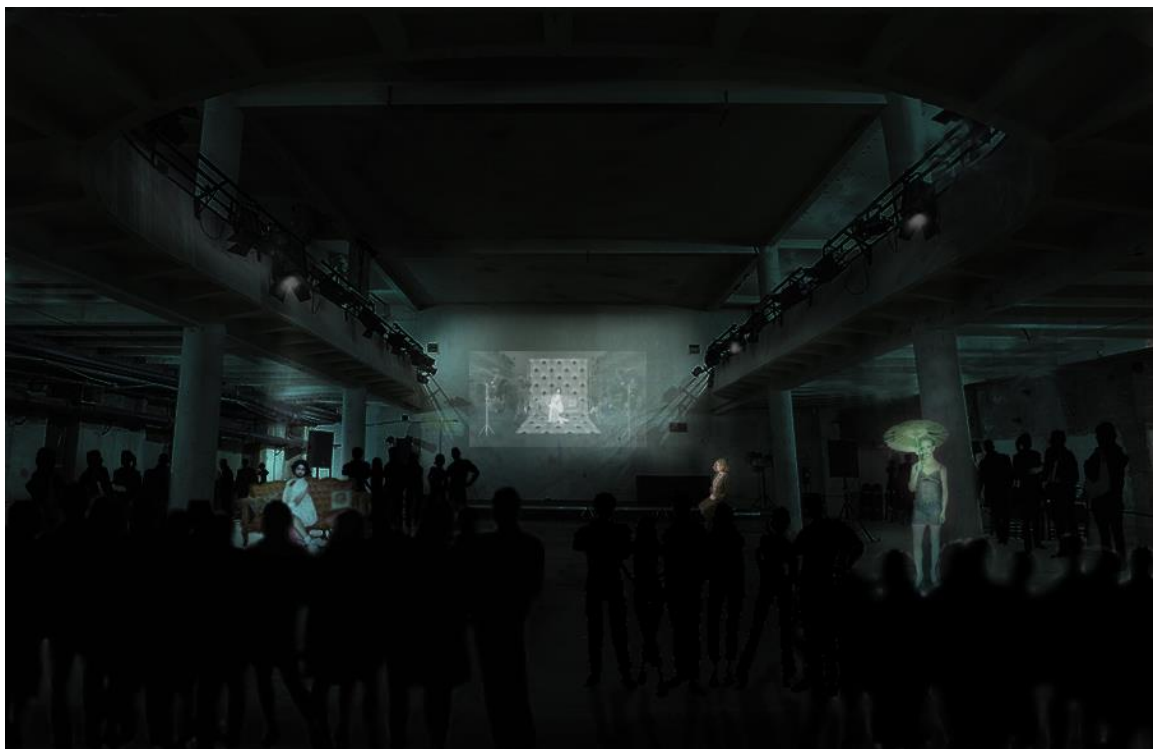
Their action is simply being present and wonder around the space and the visitors that may observe the screening of them posing like models and creating their personal *carte de visite*. In the meantime recorded versions of cat-calling with the usage of coarse language will be aired loudly in every corner of the venue.





During my research for this master's thesis I stumbled upon the installation "She's gone". The creator, Keren Goldstein is an artist and social activist that deals with gender based murder through a collection of hanging clothes. Each outfit actually belonged to a woman that was murdered based on her gender by an intimate partner and they all have a story to tell referring to how or by whom they were killed as well as the verdict of the murderer.

Inspired by "She's Gone", that is now going international, I came to realize the pure horror and anger overflowing the vacant clothes from the murder of the unlucky ones. It seems to be in tight sequence with the installation presented, the verbal abuse aired in this installation might then be seen as the stage coming ahead from murder.



The matter of this documentation is unfortunately very vivid in the current times, with news on gender based murders rising rapidly.

Playing with the relativity of time led me to create a setting that is no longer present but is projected as a memory. The performers are still there, wondering through space in silence, just the scenography as we knew it is missing. They somehow transform into observers of their own spectacle.



Part of the photo-shooting used as projection.

Through this documentation I would like to express an effective protest targeting gender based violence and hoping to bring not only awareness but also initiative for action.

X. Conclusion

My personal experiences and the visual world that we live in are factors that dramatically shape my visions on this play and mark a specific path for what I wish to create. At any other given time my visual aesthetics would be different and this fluidity that scenography has is what makes it vivid and mesmerizing in my eyes. Lulu's path was very inspiring and triggered me to research in depth social matters that have always been crucial life factors. It is my personal belief that we draw inspiration from every single experience life brings on our doorstep thus even a morning ride with the tram can hide a part of scenography in it. With this in mind I decided to present it as a visual documentation of a persona with many faces that lives through the ages.

The course of my studies gave me a new perspective on thinking and acting in a scenographical oriented way and have definitely shaped the way I perceive theater, cinema and art in general. All of my professors contributed, each in their own unique way, to enrich the way I think and perceive things but most of all pushed me to pursue my own goals. Mostly challenging for me was having to step in the shoes of a director as well and shape a character or a play from scratch.

I am thankful that at the end of my studies I was given the true opportunity to listen to my personal way of thinking and at the same time be heard, in order to create a documentation of art and society.

Both Lulu and Frank Wedekind were numerous times misconceived or unappreciated due to being vulgarly ahead of their time and as a result repelled by a big part of society. Overly overstated but recently proven to be true, Wedekind's beliefs on female and youth sexual liberation are finding a path to exist in most societies around the world.

What seems to trouble me the most is how slow and dedicated 'labor' it takes to establish basic human rights. It is very hopeful to witness the results of marches and fights after all this time that voices were muted. But maybe it is time to change the way we approach existence from the first place.

Needless to say that the scenographic solution I propose could go under further analysis and is an ongoing topic with endless possibilities. Theater is also shaped by the times it is presented, affected by sociopolitical factors and the statements and purposes it needs to serve. Thus this is my personal depiction for the time being that has already shifted through a range of solutions, consultations and ideas but I feel pleased by the level it reached so far.

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