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**FEMME FATALE IN LIEDER: SONGS OF LORELEI
BY CLARA SCHUMANN, FRANZ LISZT,
AND ALEXANDER ZEMLINSKY**

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by

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Abstract

The *femme fatale*, a seductive and dangerous woman, is a popular archetype found in literature, art, and music. In German literature, the character of Lorelei is a well-known example of the *femme fatale*. She is associated with a steep rock cliff on the Rhine River and, from the cliff, convicted of bewitching men resulting in their murder. This written document focuses on Lorelei as the *femme fatale* character in German literature as seen in three musical settings by composers Clara Schumann, Franz Liszt, and Alexander Zemlinsky. The document also includes limited musical analyses of and singer's commentary on those three settings. Finally, the document provides information about the manifestation of the *femme fatale* in classical vocal music and the sociocultural background of the *femme fatale* in nineteenth-century Europe.

KEYWORDS: Lorelei, Femme Fatale, German Lieder, Heinrich Heine, Joseph von Eichendorff, Clara Schuman, Franz Liszt, Alexander Zemlinsky

Introduction

Femme fatales have always captured our imagination. These intriguing female characters, who use their beauty and charm to manipulate and ensnare men, have been a prominent archetype of literature, film, and art for centuries. In this written document, we will explore the concept of the *femme fatale*, focusing on one example - Lorelei. To provide a deeper understanding of the character, I will examine the *femme fatale* as a fictional character as well as discuss the sociocultural background when *femme fatale* was prosperous. Additionally, we will learn of the manifestation of the *femme fatale* in classical vocal music.

The second part of the study will discuss the creation of the multifaceted character of Lorelei and how she was portrayed as a *femme fatale* character in literature and art. After her first appearance in Clemens Brentano's novel *Godwi*, Lorelei became a symbol of German patriotism, beloved by numerous poets, composers, and painters. Commentary on two of the poems, "Die Lorelei" by Heinrich Heine and "Waldesgespräch" by Joseph von Eichendorff, will show how two disparate poets have adapted and diversified Brentano's Lorelei.

Finally, the last chapter will focus on the musical settings of Lorelei by Clara Schumann, Franz Liszt, and Alexander Zemlinsky. The three *Lieder* provide diverse interpretations of the Lorelei trope, reflecting the compositional background of each composer. While Schumann's and Liszt's settings are relatively well-known, Zemlinsky's "Waldgespräch" is the lesser-known musical setting of Lorelei.

Overall, the purpose of this study is to provide insight into the character of Lorelei and the prevalence of the *femme fatale* in classical music, as well as to stimulate interest in the exploration of three musical settings on Lorelei.

Chapter 1. *Femme Fatale*

1.1 Defining the *Femme Fatale*

The *femme fatale* is an archetypal woman who lures men into destruction by means of her deadly seductive charms.¹ Despite being a stock character,² the *femme fatale* is unpredictable and multi-faceted. This can be the result of her omnipresence since time immemorial in many different cultures where the need and desire of people reflected into the creation of their own *femme fatale*. Before the term *femme fatale* was coined, this archetype was called by many other names: witch, sorceress, enchantress, vampire, virago, she-devil.³ Not only the name, but the *femme fatale* is a ‘shape-shifter.’⁴ The physical appearances of the character range from seductive woman or mermaid to animal-like woman, for example, feline, tigress, spider, praying mantis, serpent or sphinx.⁵ Siren, the predecessor of Lorelei, is also a creature half woman and half bird.

Obscurity of the intention of *femme fatale* makes her even more enigmatic. Ana Raquel Rojas, who studied the *femme fatale* specifically in *fin-de-siècle*⁶ literature, categorized the character before *fin-de-siècle* (which she called ‘fatal woman’) into two groups according to her intention.

Traditionally, the fatal woman has fallen into one of two categories: the first, like Eve and Pandora, is the woman who does not necessarily intend to cause trouble, so much as it seems to follow in her wake, as though it were the inevitable result of being a woman;

¹ Virginia M. Allen, *The Femme Fatale: Erotic Icon* (New York: Whitson Publishing Company, 1983), vii.

² Stock character is a stereotyped character easily recognized by readers or audiences from recurrent appearances in literary or folk tradition.

³ Ana Raquel Rojas, “Designing Woman: Reimagining the Femme Fatale in Fin-de-siècle Literature” (PhD diss., Cornell University, 2008), 3.

⁴ Ibid., 2-3.

⁵ Ibid., 14.

⁶ *Fin de siècle*, meaning ‘end of the century,’ generally refers to the period of time around the turn of the 20th century. This period is often associated with symbolism, decadence, and aestheticism, and is seen as a bridge between the late Victorian era and early modernism.

the second, like Lilith and Medea, is the woman who acts out of malice, who cunningly schemes and carries out her plots with intention.⁷

She can unconsciously bring disaster, or consciously seek vengeance.⁸ Rojas went further on regarding the intention of *femme fatale*, pointing out that the nineteenth-century *femme fatale* evolved from her predecessors by intensifying her intentional ambiguity.⁹ Her attraction and devotion to a man can be deceitful and the desire she expresses for a man may disguise her own ambitious self-interest.¹⁰ This veiled and unforeseeable mentality paradoxically defines the *femme fatale*: “she harbors a threat which is not entirely legible, predictable, or manageable.”¹¹ The more mysterious her desires, the more dangerous she would be.

As the term *femme fatale* conveys, the fatality is a crux of her personality. Whether she intended or not, the ending of the narrative is destruction or death of the man. For example, Salome requested decapitation of Saint John the Baptist. Lily Powers from the film *Baby Face* (1933) sexually exploits men to advance her social and financial status. After seduction, they lose their job, are abandoned by Lily, then commit suicide. Pandora’s curiosity brought disastrous outcome, releasing all evils — countless plagues, myriad pains, and vicious spirit — upon man.¹² Along the way of destruction, femininity becomes her weapon. She is frequently described as a beautiful, seductive, amorous, alluring, and erotic young woman. Along with her sensual body, the *femme fatale* may present a voluptuous dance or sing a beautiful melody.

Alienation is another main attribute when it comes to defining the *femme fatale*. Many times, she is a sorceress, immortal, queen, and goddess. This ruthless woman is separated from

⁷ Rojas, “Designing Woman,” 4.

⁸ Elizabeth K. Menon, *Evil by Design: The Creation and Marketing of the Femme Fatale* (University of Illinois Press, 2006), 4.

⁹ Rojas, “Designing Woman,” 14.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

¹¹ Mary Ann Doane, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 1.

¹² John Ayto, “Pandora,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms*.

ordinary experience, ordinary women. In France, she was frequently oriental or exotic.¹³ Her presence arouses an indifferent and chilling remoteness from human feeling.¹⁴ According to this trait, Allen says the *femme fatale* is 'less human'.¹⁵ To further this point, the *femme fatale* is less of a woman, she never fulfills and rejects the expectations of her gender role which is to bear children.

The *femme fatale*, no matter how amorous, does not conceive. ... She was construed as the woman who controlled her own sexuality, who seduced men and drained them of their "vital powers," in an exercise of eroticism that had no issue. She was—and is—the diametric opposite of the "good" woman who passively accepted impregnation, motherhood, domesticity, the control and domination of her sexuality by men.¹⁶

She is not submissive to men but has control over her own sexuality. Therefore, the *femme fatale* remains barren and is not allowed to experience motherhood. In the late twentieth century, scholars considered this malformed woman as a product of modernity and a symptom of male fears about feminism.¹⁷

It is worth noticing that many scholars, including Rojas and Allen, have differentiated the *femme fatale* of late nineteenth and twentieth century from the "predecessors" for its substantial differences in the characteristic.¹⁸ Combined with the Decadent and Symbolist movements, the *fin-de-siècle femme fatale* established its own peculiar archetype.

Rather than actively destroying men herself, the *femme fatale* has a capacity for arousing dangerous tendencies in men who, in succumbing to her charms, end up destroying themselves. ... The *femme fatale* becomes a passive agent, who may have no desire or intention to cause injury, but who, like a virus, carries a lethal threat within her.¹⁹

¹³ Allen, *The Femme Fatale*, 3.

¹⁴ Allen, *The Femme Fatale*, 4.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Doane, *Femmes Fatales*, 2-3.

¹⁸ Menon, *Evil by Design*, 20.

¹⁹ Rojas, "Designing Woman," 5.

Not only the fact that the *femme fatale* became popular during the closing decades of the nineteenth century,²⁰ but also the late appearance of the term supports their claim. We cannot clearly know by whom or when the term was coined,²¹ but the term *femme fatale* is assumed to appear in French literature as early as 1854, and in visual representations in the late 1860s.²² However, the term *femme fatale* for the purpose of this paper embraces all manifestations of fatal woman from ancient to twenty-first centuries, like the generally accepted meaning of *femme fatale*. Although the *femme fatale* in *fin de siècle* had unique facets, the characterization has been evolved and adapted from time to time, simultaneously echoing with needs of the times. The tradition of the *femme fatale* traces back to antiquity. The archetype exists in the Bible (Eve, Delilah, Salome), Greek mythology (Pandora, Siren, Circe), and Judaic mythology (Lilith).²³ On the other hand, the *femme fatale* character flourished in film noir genre and in neo-noir film, for examples, “Glida” (*Gilda*) and “Natalie” (*Memento*), reflecting the shifting gender roles during war and the feminist movement. It occurs where poets, painters, artists, and human beings exist.

Considered as the first *femme fatale*, Eve is an example of a long traditions of the *femme fatale*. She was depicted as the source of the Fall in the book of Genesis; deceived by a serpent, she ate the forbidden fruit and gave some to her husband, Adam. Although the biblical Eve was not ‘seductive’ nor ‘sexual’, it evolved gradually through the writings of theologians.²⁴ When it entered into the nineteenth century, she was depicted as a woman that was more erotic and more evil than in earlier art, in *decadent* way: “Her image acquired a series of personality traits that altered and exaggerated her character from mere sin to positive and devouring evil.”²⁵ Moreover,

²⁰ Allen, *The Femme Fatale*, 1.

²¹ Rojas, “Designing Woman,” 4.

²² Menon, *Evil by Design*, 3.

²³ Rojas, “Designing Woman,” 3.

²⁴ Menon, *Evil by Design*, 18.

²⁵ Allen, *The Femme Fatale*, 12-13.

fille d'Eve (daughter of Eve) was the alternative name of the *femme fatale* in nineteenth-century France.²⁶

The term *fille d'Eve* demonstrates two things: Eve is “arguably the first *femme fatale*”; the *fille d'Eve*, meaning “daughter of Eve”, implies all women were considered metaphorical *femme fatale*.²⁷ In J. de Marchef-Girad’s *Les femmes: leur passé, leur présent, leur avenir* (1860), where he describes creation stories in various religions and concludes with the idea that since primordial times, we confront the same point of view:

nous trouvons déjà le problème résolu: La femme a été l'être fatal, l'intermédiaire entre l'humanité et le mauvais principe [We already find the problem resolved: Woman was the fatal sex, the intermediary between humanity and the principle of evil].²⁸

This misogynistic view can be linked with the psychologist Karen Horney’s psychological origin of the *femme fatale* which Virginia Allen put together in her book *The Femme Fatale: Erotic icon*. Horney asserts that the images of *femme fatale* in literary and visual works have embodied “Dread of Woman” for men. Their violent fear is rooted in men’s emotional response to “certain biological facts,” which are the anatomy and physiology of being female, such as menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and lactation. In order to conquer this largely unacknowledged fear of women, men objectify her as “things” to be dominated and possessed.²⁹

In conclusion, the *femme fatale* is somewhat difficult to define. She projects herself as someone who is mysterious but also threatening and this projection is revealed from the male’s point of view. The *femme fatale* has been in our history since antiquity and, as long as the stories and poetry about her remain in our libraries, her persona will stay with us now and in the future.

²⁶ Menon, *Evil by Design*, 3, 17.

²⁷ Ibid., 4, 15; Allen, *The Femme Fatale*, 8.

²⁸ Menon, *Evil by Design*, 20.

²⁹ Allen, *The Femme Fatale*, 7.

The sociocultural background of the character *femme fatale* will be discussed and explored in the following chapter. It will be revealed how culture in the nineteenth century supported her popularity and further developed her character.

1.2. The Popularity of *Femme Fatale* - The Sociocultural Background

During the nineteenth century, the popularity of the *femme fatale* was immense. Visual artifacts and the literature confirm the notion that there was an inundation of images labelled *femmes fatales*. In addition, the alteration and intensification of the imagery itself assisted in building popularity.³⁰ During the first half of the nineteenth century, fatal women populated the literature of the era, for example, Goethe's Lilith in *Faust* part I (1808), Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" (1819) and "Lamia" (1820), Mérimée's *Carmen* (1845).³¹ Furthermore, the *femme fatale* emerges as a central figure in the nineteenth century, in the texts of writers such as Théophile Gautier, Charles Baudelaire, and Gustave Flaubert and in the images of painters such as Gustave Moreau and Dante Gabriel Rossetti.³²



Figure 1, 2 *Salome* by Henri Regnault (1870) and *L'Apparition* by Gustave Moreau (1874-1876)

³⁰ Allen, *The Femme Fatale*, 10.

³¹ Rojas, "Designing Woman," 211.

³² Doane, *Femmes Fatales*, 1.

The subject of both paintings is Salome, a historical and biblical figure that became an iconic *femme fatale* during *fin-de-siècle*. She could be found in poems, plays, stories, paintings, and operas. The Dance of the Seven Veils, originated in the play by Oscar Wilde, even developed into the 1908 dance craze, which The New York Times called “Salomania.”³³

The literary critic Mario Praz insists that literature is a product of a given *Zeitgeist*, a reflection of what is happening in “real life.”³⁴ Thus, the fascination with the fatal woman, and her transformation into a *femme fatale*, results from what was occurring throughout Europe during the *fin de siècle*.³⁵ Rojas addresses that the *femme fatale* is a product of her era, who incarnates the anxieties of her age.

These circumstances include: the shift in boundaries of the British colonial empire and the attendant anxieties about racial, cultural, and military supremacy; the rise of feminist movements and the New Woman; an increased preoccupation with health and hygiene; a fascination with diagnosis, classification, and pathology; a preoccupation with sexuality and feminine sexual development; and a general anxiety about the relation between degeneration and the coming end of a century.³⁶

Among numerous sociocultural factors surrounding the popularity of the *femme fatale*, this paper will focus on four aspects:

- Emancipation of Women
- Anti-feminist movement
- Prostitute as living example of the *femme fatale*
- Decadent movement

³³ Cecily Devereux, “Salomania and the Representation of Race and Gender in Modern Erotic Dance,” Wilfrid Laurier University Press, accessed February 15, 2023, <https://www.wlupress.wlu.ca/Books/S/Salomania-and-the-Representation-of-Race-and-Gender-in-Modern-Erotic-Dance>.

³⁴ Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, Trans. Angus Davidson (New York: Oxford UP, 1951), 206.

³⁵ Rojas, “Designing Woman,” 10.

³⁶ Ibid.

Emancipation of Women

The women's emancipation movement in the nineteenth century sought to improve the social, political, and economic rights of women. It was a shift from women's subordination to the authority of their head of household to seeking individual freedom and self-fulfillment.³⁷ It was a period of great progress in the struggle to gain greater rights for women, including the right to vote, own property, and pursue higher education. The landmark legislation *the Married Women's Property Acts* in the United Kingdom is a case in point.³⁸

The emergence of the 'New Woman' sparked both excitement and fear.³⁹ Menon describes this "modern woman" as "a new force in society who was seen as impudent, challenging, and even dangerous."⁴⁰ She was seen as breaking away from traditional gender roles, seeking individual freedom and pleasure, and entering the public sphere. These developments challenged social norms and presented a sense of transgression, as women were now engaging in traditionally male-dominated activities such as politics, education, labor, and commerce.⁴¹ Edward Shorter argued that the industrialization of the period led to the sexual emancipation of working-class women, who became individualistic and self-seeking and rebelled against traditional constraints.⁴² They sought pleasure and fulfillment in uninhibited sexual activity. According to Allen, this female-assertion was read as instant sexual threat.⁴³

³⁷ Edward Shorter, "Female Emancipation, Birth Control, and Fertility in European History," *The American Historical Review* 78, no. 3 (June 1973): 615-616.

³⁸ Lee Holcombe, *Wives & Property: Reform of the Married Women's Property Law in Nineteenth-Century England* (University of Toronto Press, 1983), 201;205.

³⁹ The New Woman is a term used to refer to women of the late 19th century who were challenging traditional gender roles. The term was first used in the 1890s.

⁴⁰ Menon, *Evil by Design*, 94.

⁴¹ Kathy Peiss, "Going Public: Women in Nineteenth-Century Cultural History," *American Literary History* 3, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 817.

⁴² Louise Tilly, Joan Scott and Miriam Cohen, "Women's Work and European Fertility Patterns," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6, no. 3 (Winter 1976): 447-448.

⁴³ Allen, *The Femme Fatale*, 12.

In addition, the birth control movement and the increasing mobility of women were a threat to the male population. With a dropping birth rate, women's emancipation and suffrage were connected to the ultimate damage of the nation in England.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the increasing mobility of women implied her move away from the home and maternity.⁴⁵ This independent "New Woman" was a dangerous threat to the male-dominant society. Women's emancipation created the same fear which the archetypal *femme fatale* creates.

Antifeminist Movement

The development in women's social and political status was often received in a frightened, misogynist spirit, resulting in antifeminist backlash.⁴⁶ Promoting the idea that the emancipation movement was destroying the family, popular magazines demonized feminists as the principal destroyer of families.⁴⁷ Conservatives thought the Devil seduced women to use contraceptives, and that feminism was his means of seduction.⁴⁸ Men became fearful of depopulation and the dissolution of family, wishing women to remain at home.⁴⁹

Menon further asserts that an examination of the social and political issues surrounding her creation reveals a profound concern with the rise of the women's rights movement, and the corresponding antifeminist backlash that finds justification in Eve and her *femme fatale* implications.⁵⁰ The use of advertising and showing images of *femme fatale* was men's strategy to cast down the feminists. Menon states the following:

Eventually the "dangerous" and "fatal" woman—a product of Eve's "sin"—appeared in all levels of visual culture. ... Their (Antifeminist) strategy was to flood the market with messages about "real" women in society, occasionally referring to biblical or allegorical references directly, but more often indirectly. It is only through consideration of the *fil*

⁴⁴ Allen, *The Femme Fatale*, 194.

⁴⁵ Menon, *Evil by Design*, 112.

⁴⁶ Sanna Iitti, *The Feminine in German Song* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 106-107.

⁴⁷ Menon, *Evil by Design*, 211.

⁴⁸ Allen, *The Femme Fatale*, 194.

⁴⁹ Menon, *Evil by Design*, 276.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

d'Eve, and her evil motifs in a wide range of sources, that one can grasp the truly pervasive nature of visual propaganda.⁵¹

On the other hand, by male artists, women were categorized into two contrasting groups, “good” or “bad.” By employing the literary device of juxtaposing virtue and vice, they tried to limit the range of these contemporary women and reinforce patriarchy. In this cunning strategy, women were not depicted as “human” who have diverse nuances of character, and their social advances were overlooked not only in literary resources but also in visual products.⁵²

Prostitute as Living Example of *Femme Fatale*

Prostitution certainly played a role in the development of the *femme fatale* character, as it was seen as a symbol of sexual danger and moral corruption. Many artists and writers of the time, for example, Baudelaire, Flaubert, Zola, Manet, Degas, and Wedekind, were fascinated by the figure of the prostitute. They often depicted the *femme fatale* as a seductive and mysterious woman who used her sexuality as a weapon.⁵³ The ambiguous nature of the prostitute fueled the male fantasies of female sexuality in which men can project their erotic wishes without any prohibitions.⁵⁴ The fascination occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century and lingered into the early years of the twentieth century.⁵⁵

At the same time, paradoxically, nineteenth century society vilified prostitutes. In addition, there was high anxiety surrounding bodily existence or the importance of the physical body, typically with the growing awareness of the human body's vulnerability to disease and illness.⁵⁶ Among the diseases spread by prostitutes, syphilis was the most serious threat since there was no cure for it. This venereal disease caused death and madness in which prostitutes

⁵¹ Menon, *Evil by Design*, 276.

⁵² Ibid., 11, 94.

⁵³ Doane, *Femmes Fatales*, 262.

⁵⁴ Iiti, *The Feminine in German Song*, 106; Menon, *Evil by Design*, 94.

⁵⁵ Doane, *Femmes Fatales*, 262.

⁵⁶ Iiti, *The Feminine in German Song*, 106.

often became the carriers of disease and death.⁵⁷ Consequently, governments began to regulate prostitutes through sanitary inspections and registration, which resulted in licensed brothels, so-called *maisons de tolerance*.⁵⁸ Menon points out that their restriction to prostitution was intended to reassert masculine control over feminine sexuality,⁵⁹ while Walkowitz notes these treatments of prostitutes epitomized the pervasive and underlying misogyny.⁶⁰

The conflicting attitude towards the prostitute resembles the same attitude toward the *femme fatale*. People were fascinated with the plight of the *femme fatale*, given their representations were pervasive and insistent in literature or art. The prostitute and the *femme fatale* were figures of pleasure and danger, condemned as sinful and vicious women who incite men's sexual arousal. The attempt to control the prostitute was also seen in male artists who objectified and displayed women through the figures representing *femme fatale*. The prostitute was a living example of the *femme fatale* during the nineteenth century, and she eventually appeared as the archetype in literature, such as "Marguerite Gautier" from *The Lady of the Camellias* by Alexandre Dumas, and "Nana" from *Nana* by Émile Zola.

Decadent Movement

In response to the rapid changes and anxieties of the modern world, this decadent movement continued to emerge in Europe during the late nineteenth century, particularly during the Industrial Revolution and urbanization. Decadent writers depicted a world of decay, decline, and excess, rejecting traditional moral values and seeking new forms of beauty and pleasure.

⁵⁷ Felicity Chaplin, *La Parisienne in cinema: Between art and life* (Manchester University Press, 2017), 95; Menon, *Evil by Design*, 95.

⁵⁸ Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1980), 80.

⁵⁹ Menon, *Evil by Design*, 95.

⁶⁰ Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, 81.

They often focused on taboo subjects such as sexuality, death, and the occult, and used elaborate language, with a fascination for the exotic, the morbid, and the unusual.⁶¹

The *femme fatale* was an ideal female protagonist in decadent literature. Contrasting to the romantic heroine, the *femme fatale* is active and violent, ironic, and artificial. Ridge describes how the *femme fatale* was consumed by French decadent writers:

Man is a weak decadent consumed by modern woman, a vampire or *femme fatale*. Their love is a passionate death-struggle in which the active female destroys the passive male. ... The decadent writers feel, some explicitly, many implicitly, that she is no longer woman as nature meant her to be. She incarnates destruction rather than creativity. She has lost the capacity of love, and with it her function as wife and mother.⁶²

He also notes that in Jean Lorrain's novel, *Le Vice errant*, the embodiment of the role of *femme fatale* in its decadence is found. Specifically, in the novel, when the wife, mother, earth-woman is supplanted by the vampire, or the modern woman (the *femme fatale*), the family crumbles. The disintegration of family represents the decay of society and the collapse of European civilization.⁶³

Thus, the *femme fatale* can also be seen as an intricate work of art created in response to various demands and needs from different social classes and sectors of society. In particular, its popularity during the nineteenth century was rooted in the social atmosphere of when the appearance of the 'New Woman' challenged traditional social norms. The resulting image of this modern woman was a symbol of liberation and self-expression, and a powerful and independent heroine. Some artists were fascinated with the *femme fatale*, but antifeminists used the archetype to frame radical women as sinful and corrupted. The complexity and versatility of the *femme*

⁶¹ Alex Murray, *Decadence: A Literary History* (Cambridge University Press 2020), 1-5.

⁶² George Ross Ridge, "The 'Femme Fatale' in French Decadence," *The French Review* 34, no. 4 (February 1961): 352-353.

⁶³ Ridge, "The 'Femme Fatale' in French Decadence," 359.

fatale as an artistic and cultural symbol demonstrated the ongoing negotiation of gender roles and expectations in society which were present especially during the Nineteenth century.

1.3. *Femme Fatale* Figures in Classical Music

As the musicologist Hugh Macdonald observed, “French opera never produced another *femme fatale* as Carmen.”⁶⁴ Furthermore, Macdonald believes Bizet’s *Carmen* set a standard for what the *femme fatale* character should be in opera. In reflection of fascination for the *femme fatale*, several operatic masterpieces were created. For example, Richard Strauss's *Salome* and Alban Berg's *Lulu* “may be seen as distant degenerate descendants of Bizet's temptress.”⁶⁵

In this chapter, several examples of *femme fatale* figures in Classical vocal music will be presented. Most of these examples are from opera, where intricate music and theatrical work combine. The archetype in *Lieder*, *Mélodie*, and choral works will also be briefly explored. These explorations will be limited, whereas to scrutinize every plot, and each operatic libretto, and all art song texts, would have been too large for this document. Instead, I will present a more limited exploration of the topic and present in this document examples of familiar characters of *femme fatale*.

Examples of Familiar Characters of *Femme Fatale*

“Carmen” is a fiery gypsy, who is considered a *femme fatale* because of her irresistible and dangerous sexual allure, which ultimately leads to the downfall of the male protagonist Don José. She reveals her desire and implies her treacherous power, through the contagious rhythms and chromatic excesses of the musical setting.⁶⁶ On the other hand, Micaëla is the opposite of Carmen, she is a positive and innocent female figure in the opera. It is interesting to note that

⁶⁴ Hugh Macdonald, “Bizet, Georges,” *Grove Music Online*, accessed February 5, 2023, <https://doi-org.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.51829>.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (University of Minnesota, 1991), 55.

Micaëla does not exist in the novella by Prosper Mérimée. Bizet created Micaëla as a docile and submissive woman so that the contrast between her and Carmen would be very obvious. “The opera is organized in terms of the traditional Western dichotomy between proper and improper constructions of female sexuality, between the virgin and the whore.”⁶⁷ Susan McClary’s article ‘Sexual Politics in Classical Music’ and her book *Georges Bizet, Carmen* provide an extensive study in connotative gender and sexuality among the musical writing and plot of Bizet’s Carmen.⁶⁸

“Salome” from Richard Strauss’ opera *Salome*, Op. 54 (1905) is considered another prototype of the *femme fatale*. The titular character of the opera is based on the biblical figure of Salome, who is depicted in the New Testament as a seductive and dangerous woman.⁶⁹ Appearing in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, she is the daughter of King Herod Antipas’s wife, Herodias, and is known for her dance before Herod, which led to the beheading of John the Baptist. Strauss’s score is filled with sensual and exotic music, particularly in Salome’s famous “Dance of the Seven Veils,” which emphasizes her seductive power. In particular, the music is filled with chromatic passages and dissonant harmonies, which add to the sense of sensuality and danger. In addition, Strauss adds the hypnotic and sensual atmosphere through the use of an insistent, repetitive ostinato figure. The use of the saxophone in the orchestration and its unique timbre contributes to the exotic atmosphere. By presenting “Salome” as a figure who wields her sexuality as a weapon, Strauss creates a prototype for the dangerous

⁶⁷ Ibid., 56.

⁶⁸ McClary, “Sexual Politics in Classical Music,” in *Feminine Endings*; McClary, *Georges Bizet, Carmen* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁶⁹ Tal Ilan, “Salome” *Jewish Women’s Archive*, accessed February 9, 2023, <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/salome>.

and seductive woman that would become a staple of operatic and popular culture for years to come.

Based on the same subject matter, Jules Massenet's opera *Hérodiade* (1881) was well-received by audiences and critics for its sumptuous music after its premiere. Based on the play "Hérodiade" by Gustave Flaubert, the opera is centering on Herodias who was the second wife of King Herod, simultaneously being the former wife of his brother and the mother of Salome. The opera features some famous arias, including Salomé's "Il est doux, il est bon" and John the Baptist's "Vision fugitive." The music is typically lush and romantic, with Massenet's trademark melodic style and colorful orchestration.⁷⁰

Another significant biblical *femme fatale* in opera is "Delilah."⁷¹ Appearing in the Book of Judges chapter 16, she is known for her role in the downfall of the legendary Hebrew judge and military leader, Samson. After several unsuccessful attempts, Delilah succeeded by seducing him into revealing the secret of his immense strength: that his hair had never been cut. With this information, the Philistines, enemies of the Israelites, were able to capture Samson, put out his eyes, and enslave him.⁷²

The first attempt to give Delilah life was through Voltaire. Voltaire was enthusiastic about Jean-Philippe Rameau's first opera *Hippolyte et Aricie* (1733), that he suggested Rameau write his next opera on the topic of Samson. Rameau agreed and after their collaboration (Voltaire was librettist), Rameau finished composing the opera Samson in 1733 and it contained five acts and a prologue. Due to its religious subject matter, the opera was banned by the Church

⁷⁰ Bruce Scott, "A More Spiritual Salome: Massenet's 'Hérodiade'," NPR Music, May 13, 2011, Friday, accessed February 11, 2023, <https://www.npr.org/2011/05/13/136246366/a-more-spiritual-salome-massenets-h-herodiade>.

⁷¹ Caroline Blythe, *Reimagining Delilah's Afterlives as Femme Fatale: The Lost Seduction* (London: Gloombsbury T&T Clark, 2017), 3-4.

⁷² J. Cheryl Exum, "Delilah: Bible" *Jewish Women's Archive*, accessed February 9, 2023, <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/delilah-bible>.

and was never performed.⁷³ Unfortunately, the music is now lost but the libretto survives.

Influenced by yet another librettist, Ferdinand Lemaire, Camille Saint-Saëns was convinced to write an opera on this same topic.⁷⁴ The collaboration resulted in the opera *Samson et Dalila*, Op. 47. In writing the libretto, Lemaire referred to Voltaire's treatment of the story.⁷⁵ The opera, completed in 1877 was premiered in Weimar, avoiding the censors in France which objected to the adaptation of religious subjects for the operatic stage.⁷⁶ Dalila's seduction aria "Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix" is a masterpiece of music containing erotic text and suggestive melodic, downward-sloping lines throughout.⁷⁷ The manifestation of Delilah as a *femme fatale* is also found in oratorio literature (e.g. G. F. Handel's oratorio *Samson* (HWV 57), written in 1743).

Alban Berg wrote a sensational opera featuring a seductive and manipulative woman named "Lulu," based on the libretto from Frank Wedekind's plays *Erdgeist* (Earth Spirit, 1895), and *Die Büchse der Pandora: Eine Monstertragödie* (Pandora's Box: a tragedy of monsters, 1904).⁷⁸ In this musical example, the *femme fatale*, displays contradicting ambiguity; she is portrayed as both earthly mother and prostitute, or victim and murderer.⁷⁹ In particular, she is seen as a victim of circumstance, caught in a cycle of abuse and exploitation by the men in her life. The opera's premiere in Paris in 1937 was well received by audiences, but it was banned by the Nazi regime soon after for its perceived decadence and immorality.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, "Lulu"

⁷³ Cuthbert Girdlestone, *Jean-Philippe Rameau: His Life and Work* (Courier Corporation, 1990), 194-195.

⁷⁴ Hugh MacDonald, "Samson et Dalila" *Grove Music Online*, accessed February 5, 2023, <https://doi-org.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.O904621>.

⁷⁵ Janet E. Bedell, "Camille Saint-Saëns Samson et Dalila" *The Metropolitan Opera*, October 2018, 45. <https://www.metopera.org/globalassets/season/2018-19/operas/samson-et-dalila/programs/101618-samson.pdf>

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Douglas Jarman, *Alban Berg: Lulu* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 15.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

has since been performed and recorded numerous times and remains a staple of the operatic repertoire.

Cleopatra, the historical *femme fatale* of ancient Egypt, adapted into operas by two significant composers, George Frideric Handel, and Samuel Barber. From 1724, there is Handel's opera seria in three acts, *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, HWV 17. Based on historic events from the Roman Civil War of 49-45 BC, the female protagonist, "Cleopatra," reveals her ever-changing desire through the eight *da capo* arias she sings. Highly suitable for Baroque period opera, her characteristics were as a powerful heroine and queen but also a seductive and scheming temptress. The example of Handel's opera also highlights the fact that, typical of the Baroque period, there was a great interest in exotic characters.

Later, Samuel Barber chose Shakespeare's tragedy *Antony and Cleopatra*, for the commission for the opening night of new Metropolitan Opera theatre on September 16, 1966.⁸¹ Contrasting to Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, Barber's opera focused on Cleopatra's latter years and her relationship with Mark Antony. In the opera, Barber also included the famous suicide scene with a poisonous snake. Unfortunately, the opera's premiere was considered a failure.⁸² Six years later, the revised version (collaboration with the librettist/composer Gian Carlo Menotti) was received with much better appreciation.⁸³ Later yet, in 2022, the American composer John Adams' setting of the same story, *Antony and Cleopatra*, was premiered at San Francisco Opera and was also very well received.⁸⁴ These various settings of Shakespeare's story indicate great enthusiasm for the character of "Cleopatra" which is an archetype of the *femme fatale*.

⁸¹ Joyce Kennedy, Michael Kennedy, and Tim Rutherford-Johnson, "Antony and Cleopatra," in The Oxford Dictionary of Music, accessed February 3, 2023, <https://www.oxfordreference.com>.

⁸² Fred Cohn, "From around the world," *Opera News*, April 1, 2009, 46.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ "Antony and Cleopatra," San Francisco Opera, accessed February 2, 2023, <https://www.sfopera.com/operas/antony-and-cleopatra/>

Additional examples of *femme fatale* characters are “Manon” and “Violetta,” both are strikingly attractive women, are prostitutes as Parisienne courtesans, are rejected by the patriarchy, and are eventually punished by death. The character “Manon” was created by Abbé Prévost in his novel *Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux, et de Manon Lescaut* (1731). This novel gained huge popularity with over 250 editions published between 1731 and 1981.⁸⁵ Among seven theatrical works of its adaptation, Jules Massenet’s *Manon* (1884) and Giacomo Puccini’s *Manon Lescaut* (1893) remain beloved by audience as standard operatic repertoire. With similar characteristics and circumstances, “Violetta” is the female protagonist from opera *La Traviata* (1853) by Giuseppe Verdi. The libretto by Francesco Maria Piave for Verdi’s opera was based on Alexandre Dumas’ play *La Dame aux camélias* (1852), which was adapted by Dumas himself from his own novel (1848).

Other *femme fatale* characters in opera include “Kundry” from Richard Wagner’s *Parsifal* (1882), “Pandora” from Gabriel Fauré’s *Prométhée*, Op. 82 (1900), “Medea” from the French baroque composer Luigi Cherubini’s *Médée* (1797), and the title role of *Lucrezia Borgia* (1834) by Gaetano Donizetti.

Examples of Less Familiar Characters of *Femme Fatale* Found in Musical Works

The character “Siren” first appears in Homer’s *Odyssey*, as a dangerous creature who lures sailors to their death with her singing. Contrasting to its countless adaptations and appearances in novella and paintings, the figure of “Siren” never became a well-known operatic character. Nevertheless, there are other examples of this subject found in classical music. For example, several French composers were interested in Siren. The first example from the French is *Sirènes* from *Trois Nocturnes*, L 98 by Claude Debussy. It is an impressionist orchestral

⁸⁵ Edward Joe Johnson, *Once There Were Two True Friends: Or, Idealized Male Friendship in French Narrative from the Middle Ages Through the Enlightenment* (Birmingham: Summa Publications, 2003), 247-248.

composition with a chorus singing a wordless song, that we eventually recognize as the melody of “Sirens.”⁸⁶ A second example is *La sirène* (1868, published 1886) from *Seize melodies pour chant et piano* by Georges Bizet and from the female composer Lili Boulanger, we can list her work *Les Sirènes* (1911) for mezzo soprano, chorus, and piano. Finally, from the American composer Z. Randall Stroope’s *The Sirens* (2001) for SATB choir which has been performed by numerous choirs and has been recorded several times.

Lesser-known *femme fatale* character, “Nastasya” is the protagonist from the opera *The Enchantress* (1887) by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. The libretto is based on Ippolit Shpazhinsky’s drama with the same title. In the story, “Nastasya” is a charming woman who owns an inn/brothel. After “Nastasya” rejects a devious man named Mamirov, he spreads gossip that “Nastasya” is an enchantress, and a seductress, who allegedly casts spells upon people.⁸⁷ However, she is not a sorceress and Prince Nikita and his son Yuri both become infatuated with her. Although she did not intend it, her presence around the two men brought about jealousy and resulted in destruction when she was poisoned to death, and the father went mad after killing his son.⁸⁸ “Nastasya” is an interesting operatic character that embodies many facets of the *femme fatale*. Examples are: she was framed as a bewitching seductress by the male authority, she is owner of a brothel and she is an alleged prostitute. Ultimately, her attractive charm led to a deadly effect to her lovers and even herself.

The last archetypal figure is the first *femme fatale*, “Eve.” In 1996, the prolific American composer Jake Heggie composed a song-cycle *Eve-Song*. The text is Philip Littell’s eight poems

⁸⁶ Lawrence Kramer, “‘Longindyingcall’: Of Music, Modernity, and the Sirens,” in *Music of the Sirens*, 197.

⁸⁷ Marc Haegeman, “The Enchantress,” Classical Net, 2011, accessed February 25, 2023, <http://www.classical.net/music/recs/reviews/haegeman/20111104-tchaikovsky-enchantress.php>.

⁸⁸ “The Enchantress,” Tchaikovsky Research, accessed February 26, 2023, https://en.tchaikovsky-research.net/pages/The_Enchantress.

in which the biblical Eve's eloquent recollections of her life become fused with equally foresighted comments on the fall from grace of humanity at large.⁸⁹ In short, the cycle unfolds Eve's story – her first encounter with Adam, her lust and temptations by “Snake,” her retaliations (‘Woe to Man born of woman’), and her maternal desires.⁹⁰

Through these examples, the *femme fatale* has been a popular subject in Classical music genre for its mysterious and dangerous appeal. The character's seductiveness and charisma have inspired a large number of musical works in a variety of genres, and, in each case, her ever-changing character has been the driving force behind the dramatic development.

⁸⁹ Richard Whitehouse, “Heggie Three Song Cycles,” Gramophone, accessed February 20, 2023, <https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/heggie-three-song-cycles>.

⁹⁰ Edward Seckerson, “Gramophone Review: Heggie ‘Woman: The Making Of...’ – Lilian Farahani/Maurice Lammerts Van Bueren,” Edward Seckerson, August 11, 2019, accessed February 20, 2023, <https://www.edwardseckerson.biz/reviews/gramophone-review-heggie-woman-the-making-of-lillian-farahani-maurice-lammerts-van-bueren/>.

Chapter 2. Lorelei

2.1. The Creation of Lorelei as *Femme Fatale* Character

Wasserfrau, meaning ‘Water Woman,’ is a recurring motif in German Literature, especially in folktales, legends, and mythology.⁹¹ The character is often portrayed as a beautiful water spirit or mermaid that lives in rivers, lakes, and seas, who lure men to her underwater realm. Authors and painters commonly depicted these characters as half-naked and sexually evocative, suggesting that “women were untamed creatures, a sex closer to nature than men.”⁹² One of the most famous *Wasserfrau* is “Undine,” a water spirit who falls in love with a mortal man. The story of “Undine” was first told by Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué in his novel *Undine* (1811) and later was adapted as the well-known fairy tale “The Little Mermaid” by Hans Christian Andersen. Additional literature examples of this prototype include *Die Nixe im Teich*, fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm; *Der Fischer*, poem by Goethe; *Die Regentrude*, fairy tale by Theodor Storm; and *Der Fliegende Holländer*, opera by Richard Wagner. Among all these various alterations of the theme, Lorelei has secured its position as the most popular *Wasserfrau* figure in German speaking countries.

Before its invention by Brentano, Lorelei was only the name of a rocky cliff (433 ft.) in the narrow Rhine valley near St. Goarshausen.⁹³ This rocky cliff was originally called “Lurley,” meaning ‘elfin rock.’ Due to its echoing sounds heard in this rocky cliff, it was thought that gnomes or elves lived there.⁹⁴ Clemens Brentano, one of the leaders of middle Romanticism in the German

⁹¹ Bianca Simone Lawrie, “Lorelei and The Beautiful Lau: The Portrayal of Water Nymphs in Seminal Works of 19th Century German Literature” (Thesis, The University of Waikato, 2017), 17.

⁹² Iitti, *The Feminine in German Song*, 106.

⁹³ Theodor Karst, “Heines Loreley: Gedicht und seine Vorläufer im Unterricht,” *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German* 1, no. 2 (Autumn, 1968): 38.

⁹⁴ Elizabeth Woodall, “Siren Song: Examining the Lorelei Topos in Nineteenth-Century German Art Song and Its Manifestation and Transformation in Popular Song” (Thesis, University of Kentucky, 2022), 2.

speaking world, was the first to personify the rock by a name.⁹⁵ When young Brentano attended the Gymnasium at Koblenz (1787-89) and travelled along the Rhine, he came across the echoing rock and learned of the local legends about the rock.⁹⁶ In 1801, Brentano published a novella *Godwi*. Toward the end of the book, “Violette” (whose love to “Godwi” is unrequited), sings the ballad *Zu Bacharach am Rheine*.⁹⁷ This lengthy ballad (twenty-six stanzas) is descriptive of the sorceress “Lore Lay” as both sad and beautiful.

The fictional story of “Lore Lay” begins to unfold in Bacharach which is located near the ‘Lurley’ rock. She is described as a beautiful seductress, who puts, with her evil spells, men into dangerous situations. Being summoned by the bishop, she pleads with him to burn her at the stake, because her pain from the unrequited love is unbearable.⁹⁸ She seeks death and salvation from the sin of temptation. However, the bishop, who is enchanted by the beautiful appearance of “Lore Lay,” rejects her wishes and sends her to a cloister guarded by three knights. On the way to the cloister, in order to see her lover’s castle one last time, “Lore Lay” climbs to the top of the cliff. Suddenly, she throws herself into the Rhine, after saying “There comes a boat along the Rhine; there is one standing in the boat, one who will be my love! My heart will become merry, as he will be my love!”⁹⁹ Knowing that they could not return without completing the command of the bishop, the three knights also followed “Lore Lay” and jumped to their deaths. The poem ends with the words “Lore Lay, Lore Lay, Lore Lay” echoing off the cliff’s wall.¹⁰⁰ This poetic example further exemplifies the power of Lorelei’s presence over those who surrounded her.

⁹⁵ Lawrie, “Lorelei and The Beautiful Lau,” 16; 24.

⁹⁶ Allen Wilson Porterfield, “Graf von Loeben and the Legend of Lorelei,” *Modern Philology* 13, no. 6 (October 1915): 73; Gerhart Hoffmeister, “Heine’s Lorelei and Her Reception,” in *The Literary Encyclopedia*, accessed March 21, 2023, <https://www.litencyc.com/php/stopics.php?rec=true&UID=17668>.

⁹⁷ Lawrie, “Lorelei and The Beautiful Lau,” 24.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 83; Clemens Brentano, “Zu Bacharach am Rheine,” stanza 11-13.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, stanza 22-23.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, stanza 26.

Annegret Fauser noted that Brentano's *Lorelei* ballad was the first literary text which turned the spirit into a woman and thus substantiated the local narratives into a widely accepted legend in all of Germany.¹⁰¹ Since the landscape was transformed into its female embodiment, Lorelei became a popular character of seducing *Wasserfrau* (Water Woman in German Literature). In the first half of the nineteenth century, the character made appearances in literary works by Joseph von Eichendorff, Niklas Vogt, Aloys Schreiber, Otto Heinrich Graf von Loeben and Heinrich Heine.¹⁰² Although each Lorelei has slight differences in its name and identity, it always manifests as *femme fatale* who lures men and brings destructive result to them. In this chapter, I will investigate and detail what kind of features contribute to Lorelei's identity.

Table 2.1. Poetic text describing Lorelei's physical beauty from the Lorelei poems by Brentano, Eichendorff, Loeben, and Heine.

Author	Work	Lines describing Lorelei's beauty	Translation
Brentano	Zu Bacharach am Rheine	- Sie war so schön und feine - Und mußte sie begnaden, / So schön war ihr' Gestalt. - Die Augen sanft und wilde, / Die Wangen rot und weiß, / Die Worte still und milde / Das ist mein Zauberkreis.	- She was so beautiful and fine - And had to pardon her, / Her figure was so beautiful. - The eyes soft and wild, / The cheeks red and white, / The words quiet and gentle / This is my magic circle.
Eichendorff	Waldgespräch	- Du schöne Braut! - So wunderschön der junge Leib	- You beautiful bride! - So beautiful is the young body
Loeben	Der Lurleyfels	- Lässt her die Locken wallen unter dem Perlenkranz. - Sie ist die schöne Lore	- Let the curls flow under the pearl wreath. - She is the beautiful Lore
Heine	Die Lorelei	- Die schönste Jungfrau sitzt / Dort oben wunderbar, - Ihr goldnes Geschmeide blitzet, / Sie kämmt ihr goldenes Haar	- The most beautiful maiden sits / Wonderful up there, - Her golden jewelry glitters, / She combs her golden hair.

First, the physical appearance of Lorelei is beautiful and attractive. Every writer of Lorelei portrays her as an enticing virgin (see Table 2.1). In particular, the adjective "schön(e)" (beautiful)

¹⁰¹ Annegret Fauser, "Rheinsirenen: Loreley and Other Rhine Maidens," in *Music of the Sirens*, ed. Linda Austern, Inna Naroditskaya (Indiana University Press, 2006), 252.

¹⁰² Ignace Feuerlicht, "Heine's 'Lorelei': Legend, Literature, Life," *The German Quarterly* 53, no.1 (January 1980): 83-84.

is used by all four poets, with Brentano providing the most detailed description of her figure and Eichendorff being the only one to directly mention her body (“Leib”).

Today’s well-known image of Lorelei is similar to Heine’s version of a maiden combing her blonde hair. According to Allen, the repeated imagery of long flowing hair is a striking element of the visual iconography of the *femme fatale*.¹⁰³ Additionally, the use of gold in the material, the comb, and Lorelei’s hair recall the vanity often associated with Parisienne culture.

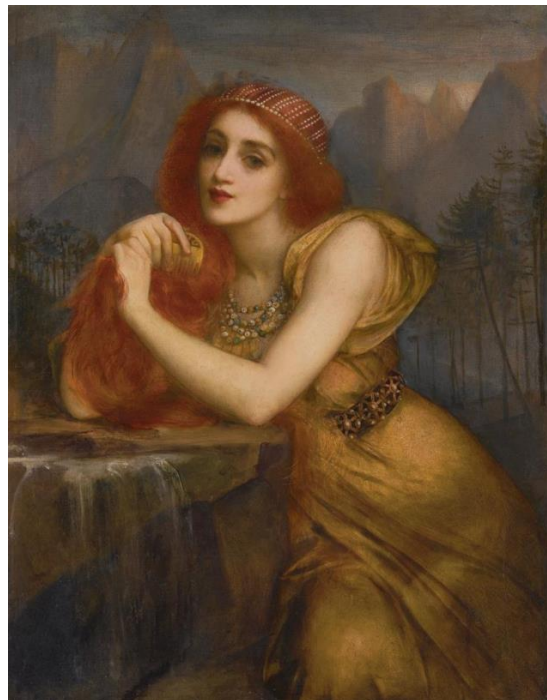


Figure 2.1. *Lorelei, the Nymph of the Rhine* by Charles Edward Halle (1901)

In Brentano's ballad, Lorelei describes herself as the subject of magical seduction, stating that “My eyes are two flames, my arms are magic wands” (“Die Augen sind zwei Flammen, mein Arm ein Zauberstab”). Overall, Lorelei's appearance and seductive qualities make her an alluring yet dangerous figure, embodying the classic archetype of the *femme fatale*.

¹⁰³ Allen, *The Femme Fatale*, 4.

The fatal consequence to whom Lorelei encounters is another distinct feature of *femme fatale*. Menon said that the *femme fatale* has come to be known as an archetypal woman whose evil characteristics cause her to either unconsciously bring destruction or consciously seek vengeance.¹⁰⁴ In Brentano's ballad, three knights commit suicide due to Lorelei. In Loeben's and Heine's poetry, the sailor and his ship crash on the rocks, being distracted by her beauty and song. Eichendorff and Brentano proposed that Lorelei's actions were motivated by a desire for revenge due to her past romantic disappointments, while Heine's version does not provide a clear explanation for her destructive behavior.¹⁰⁵

In the previous chapter, it was noted that 'alienation' is one of the defining features of the *femme fatale*. Through her portrayal as sorceress, immortal, exotic, and goddess, the character of *femme fatale* is depicted as being estranged from ordinary experience by ordinary women. Likewise, the character of Lorelei was portrayed as not only special but eerie. Brentano portrayed her as a sorceress (Zauberin), while Eichendorff's characterization was that of a witch (Hexe), and Loeben defined her as a magical maiden (Zauberfräulein). In the history of Medieval Europe, the fear and hatred toward those that were thought to be witches (sorceress), were expressed in the infamous witch-hunts of the day. This fear and hatred can be seen as analogous to the suspicion and hostility toward mysterious women with unknown power, who epitomize the *femme fatale*.

Siren, the predecessor of Lorelei, has been one of the representative *femme fatale* characters found in ancient myths. Although Siren was described as half-woman and half-bird, there are several commonalities between Siren and Lorelei. In Homer's *Odyssey*, the group of Sirens have beautiful faces and seductive voices, who reside on one of the coastal islands between Italy and

¹⁰⁴ Menon, *Evil by Design*, 4.

¹⁰⁵ Iitti, *The Feminine in German Song*, 103.

Sicily.¹⁰⁶ The Sirens' song can bewitch sailors, causing them to crash their boats into rocks and land. This song was accompanied by a lyre and the text is about the Trojan War and of things to come.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, the power of Lorelei's song is a key element in its identity as *femme fatale*. The earliest version of the character, created by Brentano, did not sing. However, in the literature by Loeben, Schreiber, and Heine, the singing of Lorelei is so beautiful and powerful that men became entranced and hypnotized, unable to resist her enticement. This wondrous song inspired numerous contemporary composers to set the poem to music. Furthermore, the Brentano's version and Eichendorff's version of Lorelei add a layer of another *femme fatale* prototype, Eve.¹⁰⁸ Brentano's "Lore Lay" is summoned for her 'sin' of tempting men. Additionally, she seduces the bishop (the man of God) and causes confusion in his thinking. Eichendorff portrays her as treacherous and as a wicked woman, the opposite of a devoted Christian.

The element of water is the last component which consists of Lorelei's identity as *femme fatale* character. Water, the sea, and the river has been intimately linked to femininity with its variability and life-giving properties.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, water has been a powerful symbol of unruly desires and excessive female sexuality.¹¹⁰ Lorelei's association with water reinforces her status as a *femme fatale* character. Her identity is intricately woven with the elements of water, beauty, and danger, making her an enduring and fascinating figure in German folklore.

During the nineteenth century, Lorelei had been shaped as a powerful and legendary *femme fatale* figure in German speaking lands. Basic elements such as Lorelei's appearance, the

¹⁰⁶ Nicholas J. Richardson, "Sirens," *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, March 7, 2016, accessed February 20, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.013.5956>.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Lawrie, "Lorelei and The Beautiful Lau," 55.

¹⁰⁹ Linda Phyllis Austern, "Teach Me to Heare Mermaides Singing": Embodiments of (Acoustic) Pleasure and Danger in the Modern West in *Music of the Sirens*, ed. Linda Austern, Inna Naroditskaya (Indiana University Press, 2006), 55-56.

¹¹⁰ Savo Karam, The Uncanny, "Aura of the Femme Fatale's Icon in Byron's *Don Juan*," *Advances in Social Science and Culture* 2, no.3 (2020): 39.

destructive result she brought and her identity as sorceress/witch support the description of her as a *femme fatale* character. The characteristics of Siren and Eve, representative archetypes of *femme fatale*, are reflected in Lorelei herself, therefore solidifying its embodiment.

2.2. Heinrich Heine's *Die Lorelei*

Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) was a prominent German poet in the nineteenth century, who had a significant impact on German literature. However, during his lifetime, he was a target of anti-Semitism for his Jewish background and political stance.¹¹¹ For instance, Richard Wagner felt did not understand German culture, portraying him as “an emblem of the Jews' foreignness to German culture.”¹¹² Heine was critical of German society and admired Napoleon, supporting the July Revolution of 1830, after which Heine ended up in exile to Paris. For many decades his reputation was stronger abroad, than at home. His famous works include *Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen* (Germany: A Winter's Tale), *Atta Troll: Ein Sommernachtstraum* (Atta Troll: A Midsummer Night's Dream), and *Reisebilder* (Travel Pictures).¹¹³ He was also known for his lyrical prose, which was set to music by celebrated composers like Robert Schumann, Franz Schubert, and Felix Mendelssohn.¹¹⁴

“Die Lorelei” (1823)

Heine's poem ‘Die Lorelei,’ written in 1823 at Lüneberg,¹¹⁵ is included in *Buch der Lieder* (1827), the poet's best-known collection of verse.¹¹⁶ It is comprised of five sections: “Junge Leiden” (Young Sorrows), “Lyrisches Intermezzo” (Lyrical Intermezzo), “Die Heimkehr” (Homecoming), “Aus der Harzreise” (From the Harz Journey), and “Die Nordsee”

¹¹¹ Paul Reitter, "Heinrich Heine," in *The Literary Encyclopedia*, accessed March 20, 2023, <https://www.litencyc.com/php/people.php?rec=true&UID=2067>.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ *The Oxford Companion to German Literature*, 3rd ed., s.v. “Heine.”

¹¹⁴ Ibid., s.v. “Eichendorff.”

¹¹⁵ Porterfield, “Loeben and the Legend of Lorelei,” 74.

¹¹⁶ *The Oxford Companion to German Literature*, s.v. “Buch der Lieder.”

(The North Sea).¹¹⁷ According to *Oxford Companion to German Literature*, the most recurring topic of the poetry are dreams and love, and they are often dominated by a self-conscious destructive irony.¹¹⁸ “Die Lorelei” is the second poem in the cycle “Die Heimkehr.”

The poem consists of six stanzas. Like many other poems from *Buch der Lieder*, “Die Lorelei” features quatrains that are reminiscent of folk songs.¹¹⁹ Here, the subject of Lorelei is treated as a legend, a fairy tale, or a folklore by contemporary writers even though Brentano was the creator of the character ‘Lorelei.’ Heine uses a frame narrative for all six stanzas. This frame narrative is a literary technique which allows the author to tell a story set in another time and place within the story.¹²⁰ In “Die Lorelei”, the first and last stanzas provide a first-person frame (bookends to the internal verses), while verses 2-5 deliver the story of Lorelei.¹²¹

In the first stanza, the speaker is unsure why he feels drawn to an old fairy tale. The second stanza sets up the scenery of a peaceful Rhine River. The time of day is sunset, and the tranquil breeze presents making the landscape beautiful. Youens noted that the sunset *mise-en-scène* carries us from the narrator’s present time to a different time (that of the inset tale), and from modernity to myth.¹²² Lorelei finally makes her appearance in the third stanza. However, Heine indicates her as the fairest maiden (“die schönste Jungfrau”) and conceals her name of “Lorelei.” She sits on top of the rock cliff combing her long golden hair. The fourth stanza speaks of her wondrous and powerful melody (“eine wundersame, gewalt’ge Melodei”). Feuerlicht said:

¹¹⁷ Kathleen Kuiper, “The Book of Song,” Britannica, accessed March 28, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Book-of-Songs>.

¹¹⁸ *The Oxford Companion to German Literature*, s.v. “Buch der Lieder.”

¹¹⁹ Hoffmeister, “Heine’s Lorelei and Her Reception.”

¹²⁰ Dino Franco Felluga, “Frame Narrative,” Introductory Guide to Critical Theory, accessed March 31, 2023, <https://cla.purdue.edu/academic/english/theory/narratology/terms/framenarrative.html>.

¹²¹ Woodall, “Examining the Lorelei Topos,” 10.

¹²² Soutan Youens, *Heinrich Heine and the Lied* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 251.

“Gewaltig” has been found to be inconsistent with the nature of the Lore-Ley and with “wundersam” and compared to the sudden blast of a trombone which tears apart the harmony in an alienation effect. But the word refers to the melody, not to the sound. It is not a synonym of “loud” or “deafening” but of “irresistible” or “magic.”¹²³

In the fifth stanza, the sailor is entranced by the Lorelei’s song and ignores the danger of the reefs. Finally, the sailor and his boat tragically crash into the Lorelei rock. Feuerlicht points out what distinguishes Heine’s Lorelei from other Loreleis and the Sirens, that is her lack of communication: “She ignores him completely”; “one is not even sure that she notices him.”¹²⁴ Other interpreters such as Prawer and Buck viewed her as the “heartlessness,” the “evil or ... stupidly malignant soul,” and the “delight in destroying others.”¹²⁵ Iitti observes that Heine’s portrayal of the Lorelei reflects a male-oriented view of femininity.

He (Heine) ultimately offers a moral teaching—the senses must not be affected by music. Music, as embodied in Lorelei’s song, is therefore represented as perilous and feminine. Both Romantic poetry and musical aesthetics suggest gendered polarities, whereby reason and morality signify the masculine, and the sense and corporeality the feminine. The male-oriented view of the corporeal prevails, and thus positive constructions of the feminine are rare.¹²⁶

Thus, Heine’s depiction of the Lorelei not only embodies the dangers of succumbing to the feminine allure but also perpetuates gendered stereotypes prevalent in Romantic poetry and musical aesthetics.

Heine’s Motivation Behind the Poetry

There exist several hypotheses about his motivation behind his poetry “Die Loreley.” One hypothesis is that Heine’s unrequited love for his cousin, Amalie, was a significant inspiration for his poetry.¹²⁷ Amalie was the daughter of the wealthy uncle who supported Heine as well as his father. It is evident from the letter to his school friend, Christian Sethe that Heine’s

¹²³ Feuerlicht, “Heine’s ‘Lorelei’,” 87.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 85.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Iitti, *The Feminine in German Song*, 93-94.

¹²⁷ Feuerlicht, “Heine’s ‘Lorelei’,” 90.

unrequited love for Amalie was a significant source of pain for him, and it likely inspired much of his poetry, including "Die Lorelei."¹²⁸ The protagonist's death at the hands of a beautiful but dangerous woman may be seen as a metaphor for Heine's own suffering at the hands of Amalie.

Another hypothesis is that Heinrich Heine's motivation behind "Die Lorelei" was to caution German society about the dangers of the excessive pursuit of Romanticism, which was prevalent during his time.¹²⁹ Heine employs Lorelei as a symbol for the seductive allure of Romanticism, highlighting how the obsessive pursuit of beauty and pleasure can lead people away from reality and into a kind of spiritual death. According to Shin, "the German people represented by the boatsman are entranced by Lorelei's song, falling into an illusion that ultimately leads to their destruction."¹³⁰ This phenomenon of Romanticism can be attributed to the delayed development of modern bourgeois society in German-speaking Europe. As societies had less time to adapt to modernity, particularly with the sudden political changes in the wake of the French Revolution and rapid industrialization in Germany, a widespread 'Romanticization' of the past occurred.¹³¹

Heine, as a German Jew, often felt alienated from mainstream German Christian society, and his works reflect this. In "Die Lorelei," Heine may have used the allegory of the golden-haired maiden to represent native Germans "who somewhat obviously cause destruction to Jews."¹³² The Jews and Heine himself, like the boatsman in the poem, may have been looking up to the Aryan Germans, hoping for equality and assimilation, but being denied it.¹³³

¹²⁸ Richard Stokes, "Heinrich Heine: the Cynical Romantic," *Bachtrack*, March 9, 2020, accessed March 26, 2023, <https://bachtrack.com/feature-richard-stokes-heinrich-heine-schumann-dichterliebe-march-2020>.

¹²⁹ Hye Seung Shin, "Let the poem sing and the music speak: A Study on the Music as a Social Mirror with Emphasis on the Lied Lorelei," *Eum'ak nondan/Journal of the Science and Practice of Music* 30 (2013), 23-50.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 27-28.

¹³¹ Lawrie, "Lorelei and The Beautiful Lau," 15-16.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 40.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 50.

Symbol of Patriotism and the Nazis

The figure of Lorelei has long been a popular symbol of patriotism in German culture, particularly after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. Lorelei viewed as a political icon, with Germans evoking her as a traditional siren and as a guardian of their rivers, streams, wells, and oceans.¹³⁴ The success of Silcher's folk tune setting of Heine's "Die Lorelei" further solidified her as a national hymn and a symbol of '*Rheinromantik*'. Lorelei's popularity even extended beyond Germany, with immigrants carrying the Lorelei song to the United States and German colonies in Southwest Africa.¹³⁵

During the Nazi regime, the Loreley was used as a symbol of German national identity and was associated with hypermasculine, Teutonic ideals. The Nazis were not happy with Heine's popularity and burned his books, however, they had no choice but to preserve "Die Lorelei" and labeled its author as "unknown."¹³⁶

...there were many such metamorphoses of the Loreley into hyper-Teutonic emblem: it is no wonder that the Nazi Lutz was so infuriated at the poem's popularity. Attributing its success to Silcher's "singable, ingratiating, soft melody," he accuses Heine yet again of lacking originality. True Germans, such as Brentano and Eichendorff, should be credited with the Loreley, he storms, while "Ich weiß nicht, was soll es bedeuten" is actually proof of Heine's un-Germanness.¹³⁷

It is important to recognize that the reason for the Nazis' hatred of Heine and their efforts to discredit him as the author of "Die Lorelei" was largely due to his Jewish background, as Heine was a "particularly insidious example of Jewish emancipation in Germany."¹³⁸ This labeling of

¹³⁴ Fauser, "Rheinsirenen," 257.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 252.

¹³⁶ Iitti, *The Feminine in German Song*, 94; Heinrich Heine, the poet of Silcher's Lorelei song, had his works banned due to his Jewish background.

¹³⁷ Wolfgang Lutz, "Schulß mit Heinrich Heine!," *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* 7 (1936): 800-805; Youens, *Heine and the Lied*, 264.

¹³⁸ Harry Slochower, "Attitudes towards Heine in German Literary Criticism," *Jewish Social Studies* 3, no. 4 (1941): 355-356; Hoffmeister, "Heine's Lorelei and Her Reception."

Heine as an “unknown poet” was not only an attempt to discredit his authorship of “Die Lorelei,” but also a part of the larger Nazi campaign against Jewish culture and identity.

2.3. Joseph von Eichendorff’s *Waldesgespräch*

Joseph von Eichendorff (1788-1857) was a renowned German poet and writer of the Romantic period. He was raised in a noble family and was a devout Catholic. During the Napoleonic war, he joined the Prussian army, where he served as a volunteer in the Lützow Free Corps. Eichendorff’s work is known for its romantic themes of nature, love, and spirituality, as well as its lyrical quality and musicality.¹³⁹ Many composers were attracted to his lyric texts, for example, Robert Schumann, Hugo Wolf, Johannes Brahms, and Erich Korngold.¹⁴⁰ Eichendorff’s most famous works include the novella *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* (Memoirs of a Good-for-Nothing), which tells the story of a young man who runs away from home and embarks on a series of adventures. Also, the poem “Mondnacht” (Moonlit Night), which expresses the beauty and mystery of the moonlit landscape is another favorite.

Ahnung und Gegenwart

‘Waldgespräch’ occurs as an untitled duet in Eichendorff’s first novel *Ahnung und Gegenwart* (Premonition and the Present), which consists of three books and twenty-four chapters.¹⁴¹ Later, this poem appeared in Eichendorff’s collection of poetry titled *Bildungsroman* (1837) and was then given the name “Waldgespräch.” In the novella *Ahnung und Gegenwart*, the Romantic ingredients of landscape and atmosphere mingle with serious criticism of contemporary society and religious faith.¹⁴² In the 15th chapter of the second book, which

¹³⁹ *The Oxford Companion to German Literature*, s.v. “Eichendorff.”

¹⁴⁰ “Joseph von Eichendorff (1788-1857): Song List,” Oxford Lieder, accessed March 30, <https://www.oxfordlieder.co.uk/poet/120>.

¹⁴¹ *The Oxford Companion to German Literature*, s.v. “Waldgespräch.”

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, s.v. “Ahnung und Gegenwart.”

discusses the matters of life such as confusion, strangers and alienation, the protagonist “Friedrich” and his companion “Leontin” make the acquaintance of two mysterious hunters on the Rhine. The poem is built through a dialogue structure, the stanzas are sung alternately by “Leontin” and one of two mysterious hunters. Later in the novel, it is discovered that the singing hunter is the “Countess Romana,” who initially remains unrecognized because of her disguise.¹⁴³

In the novella, this in-set song ‘Waldesgespräch’ is used to refer to the circumstances of the main character “Friedrich,” although it is sung by the secondary character “Leontin.”¹⁴⁴ In *Ahnung und Gegenwart*, “Friedrich” is a young knight who leaves his privileged life and sets out on a journey about self-discovery. In chapter 12, earlier than “Waldesgespräch” (Chapter 15), “Friedrich” encounters “Countess Romana.” In the chapter, she appears seductive to him: “Her beauty was quite extravagantly rich, southern, and dazzling.... Her movements were fiery, her large, burning, penetrating eyes...swept over Friedrich like a magnet.”¹⁴⁵ When he visits the castle of the Countess, Friedrich is astonished by its extravagance, he eats the fruits and drink served by Romana, and spends the night at her castle.¹⁴⁶ Suddenly, a wondrous song is heard and it wakes him up. The song, “Vergangen ist der lichte Tag” (“Daylight has departed”),¹⁴⁷ was sung by “Leontin,” who wants his friend Friedrich to abandon the temptation of women and its deceitful world and to join him in life’s journey. Though beautiful Romana lies undressed at the foot of his bed, Friedrich resists the seduction and leaves the castle. The novel states: “He

¹⁴³ Ceren Ceylan, Julia Fichtner und Julia-Marie Franken, “Waldesgespräch – Joseph von Eichendorff,” Liedinterpretation Online Folkwang Universität der Künste, accessed March 3, <https://liedinterpretationonline.folkwang-uni.de/wp-content/uploads/15-Literatur.pdf>.

¹⁴⁴ The poems that appeared interspersed in the text can also be found in Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*; “The Grey Hour,” *Liederabend* (blog), December 9, 2020, accessed March 24, 2023, <https://www.liederabend.cat/en/bloc/entrades/1079-the-grey-hour>.

¹⁴⁵ Heidi Magdalena Waitschies, “Ahnung und Gegenwart: Eichendorff’s early version of the “Vita Poetae,”” (Master’s thesis., University of Montana, 1967), 46; Joseph von Eichendorff, *Ahnung und Gegenwart*, (Nürnberg: Johann Leonhard Schrag, 1815; repr., Berlin, 2016), 118.

¹⁴⁶ Eichendorff, *Ahnung und Gegenwart*, 129-140.

¹⁴⁷ Later, Eichendorff entitled the poem “Nachtlied.”

breathed deeply as he rode out into the glorious night, his soul freed from a thousand chains. It was as if he were returning from feverish dreams, or from a long, wild, dissolute life of pleasure.”¹⁴⁸ From then on, the frantic Romana loves Friedrich, but he despises her. The poem portrays the relationship between Friedrich (the religious knight) and Romana (dangerous seductive woman). Later in this chapter, we will discover how the character “Countess Romana” represents Lorelei and the *femme fatale*.

“Waldgespräch” (1815)

Eichendorff’s ‘Waldesgespräch’ was published eight years earlier than Heine’s “Die Loreley.” Although Eichendorff was aware of his friend Brentano’s creation of ‘Lore Lay’ in his novel *Godwi* (1801), the Eichendorff version of Lorelei has no relationship to water like Heine’s *Wasserfrau*. Instead, the setting of Eichendorff’s poem takes place in a dark forest at night.

Eichendorff’s poem consists of four stanzas and is in the form of a dialogue between the knight and Lorelei. In the first stanza, the knight begins the conversation. He is wondering why a young lady is wandering in the dark forest unaccompanied. Addressing her as young bride (“schöne Braut”), he suggests walking her home. Stanza one presents the male observation of a young woman roaming alone, which is against patriarchal society of the day. According to Jensen, a “normal” woman would not have autonomous mobility to roam freely.¹⁴⁹ As a result, the young woman goes astray, and the man has power to govern and possess her. Here, the knight says, ‘I’ll lead you home,’ but we do not know if the ‘home’ to which he refers is his or hers. His rhetoric might “allude to an intended rape.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Eichendorff, *Ahnung und Gegenwart*, 142.

¹⁴⁹ Birgit A. Jensen, “The Witch in His Head: Rupturing the Patriarchal Discourse in Eichendorff’s Ballad “Waldgespräch,” *Goethe Yearbook* 29, (2022): 28.

¹⁵⁰ Jensen, “Patriarchal Discourse,” 31.

In response to this, the woman expresses her disgust toward the deceit and cunningness of men. Like Brentano's Lore Lay, she is in pain and grieves because of her lover's betrayal. In the third line, she hears the "Waldhorn"(The hunting horn). "Waldhorn," a compound word of 'Wald' (forest) and 'Horn' (horn), is the only auditory image in the poem.¹⁵¹ Furthermore, Eichendorff uses the verb 'irren' when he addresses the sound of the horn. The word 'irren' is translated to 'wanders,' or 'stray' in the poem. However, there exists more the underlying negative meaning of the word. When the word is used in reflexive verb form, 'sich irren,' the meaning is 'to be mistaken' or 'wrong.'¹⁵² In adjective form ('irre'), it means mad, crazy, and confused.¹⁵³ The Lorelei's impulse of hunting men is uncontrollable and insane, rather than planned. In the following line, she implores the knight to flee from the forest and from herself. This stanza implies that Eichendorff's Lorelei is cursed and bewitched, and that, due to the sorrow and agony resulting from her lover's betrayal, she has no choice but to kill the men she encounters.¹⁵⁴

In the third stanza, the knight bluntly discloses his sexual desire toward the woman by expressing these words "So wondrously beautiful her young body" ("So wunderschön der junge Leib"). Here, the woman is seen as a "seductively adorned half-animal" but is reduced to "a miraculously attractive young body ("wunderschön[er] Leib") without a face."¹⁵⁵ Following, the knight realizes the woman roaming in the woods is Lorelei and now tests his Christian faith. It is revealed in lines three and four that the knight asks for God's help so that he can get away from

¹⁵¹ In other versions of Lorelei, the only auditory image is her singing.

¹⁵² "English translation of 'irren,'" in *Collins*, accessed April 1, 2023, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com>.

¹⁵³ "English translation of 'irre,'" in *Collins*, accessed April 1, 2023, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com>.

¹⁵⁴ This feature of Lorelei is analogous to Brentano's version of Lorelei, who wants to cease seducing all men involuntarily; Youens, *Heine and the Lied*, 248.

¹⁵⁵ Jensen, "Patriarchal Discourse," 35; He notes that "She is discursively fused with an animal, her horse, when he uses a singular verb ('ist') for a plural subject ('Ross und Weib')."

the ominous power of the ‘heathen’ witch.¹⁵⁶ According to Youens, “In Eichendorff’s universe, Man is always threatened by heathen forces luring him into the greatest sin of all. Woman is a temptation leading away from God.”¹⁵⁷ The point here is the knight is weaker than the power of Lorelei and cannot ignore her through his own efforts, and that he needs the help of God.

After her true identity is discovered as Lorelei, she sings her mocking line “Es ist schon spät, es ist schon kalt.” This statement articulates and strengthens the change in positions of power. Following, she declares that the knight is trapped and under her influence by singing the words “You will never leave this forest again!” (“Kommst nimmermehr aus diesem Wald!”). Here in the poem, the forest implies the nature, where the individual encounters the threatening and unpredictable forces.¹⁵⁸ The nature contrasts sharply with the civilized world, the realm of reason and culture, where men hold a prominent position than women do:

As a quintessential Romantic setting, the forest evokes the threatening forces of nature in whose realm the individual is confronted with an alien world that serves as a counterpoint to the predictable order found in civilization, including the hierarchical position of men and women in society.¹⁵⁹

Countess Romana and the *Femme Fatale*

“Countess Romana” in the novel *Ahnung und Gegenwart* shares several qualities with the Lorelei character. The beautiful, fascinating seductress Romana lives in a luxurious castle, which appears magical and stands high on a cliff.¹⁶⁰ Eichendorff’s attractive Lorelei is also a wealthy witch, who can adorn her horse and herself. In addition, Lorelei’s castle is located on a high rock face, which looks into the depths of the Rhine River. As the unknown knight was entranced by Lorelei, Friedrich is captivated in the magical atmosphere surrounding Romana. While

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Youens, *Heine and the Lied*, 247.

¹⁵⁸ Jensen, “Patriarchal Discourse,” 27.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Eichendorff, *Ahnung und Gegenwart*, 137.

Eichendorff describes Romana as a pagan (“heidnisch”), she described herself as a ‘sorceress’ in the poem.¹⁶¹ Both Lorelei and Romana challenge men who have religious beliefs (Christianity). Corresponding to Lorelei’s beautiful voice, Romana has talents in music, singing, and composing poetry. Finally, Friedrich’s rejection of her love leads her to commit suicide. Her death resembles the fate of Brentano’s sorrowful Lorelei, who jumps into the Rhine River after seeing a hallucination of her lover.

Other evidences contribute to her embodiment of the *femme fatale*. When Romana sings ‘Waldgespräch’ with Leontin, she is disguised as a hunter. She acquires mobility by dressing up like a man. In the period of *fin-de-siècle*, cross-dressing and the mobility of women were seen as the characteristics of ‘New Woman,’ or the *femme fatale*.¹⁶² Romana’s sexuality is a key part of her appeal, and she freely chooses her lovers, as Friedrich becomes disgusted by his earlier attraction to her. Her behavior was scandalous and shocking, as Eichendorff’s friend Otto Heinrich von Loeben surmises that “Romana must have been physically present, and you must have been conceived of her in some erotic adventure.”¹⁶³

Furthermore, in Countess Romana, we learn of the figure of one of the oldest *femme fatale* characters, Eve. The story of Romana and her mother brings up the image of the Garden of Eden. The garden symbolizes the life within boundaries and divine protection.¹⁶⁴ Her mother, who was aware of Romana’s intense (uncontrollable and violent) personality, warns her ‘not to jump out of the garden.’¹⁶⁵ However, Romana chooses to use her powers for her own pleasure,

¹⁶¹ Betty Vogel, “‘From und Fröhlich’; The Conception of Happiness in Eichendorff’s *Ahnung und Gegenwart*,” (Master’s Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1968), 52; Waitschies, “*Ahnung und Gegenwart*,” 47.

¹⁶² Menon, *Evil by Design*, 112.

¹⁶³ Jensen, “Patriarchal Discourse,” 39-40.

¹⁶⁴ Waitschies, “*Ahnung und Gegenwart*,” 47.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 53.

entering a zone of danger. This choice ultimately leads to her downfall, as she becomes a victim of her own desires.

In conclusion, Countess Romana's character in *Ahnung und Gegenwart* is a complex and fascinating portrayal of the *femme fatale*. Her beauty, allure, and uncontrolled powers make her a dangerous and intriguing figure, evoking both the archetype of Lorelei and Eve. Countess Romana's story encapsulates Eichendorff's belief that the allure of the *femme fatale* has the potential to endanger the lives of virtuous men.

Chapter 3. Three Musical Settings of Lorelei

3.1. Clara Schumann, *Lorelei*

Clara Schumann (1819-1896) was a German pianist, composer, and piano teacher. Both her parents were pianists, and her mother was also a singer. As a child prodigy, from a very young age, she enjoyed success as a professional concert pianist. Despite her father's extreme objections, she married Robert Schumann (1810-1856), the pupil of her father Friedrich Wieck. Considered as one of the most highly skilled, accomplished, and significant female composers of the Romantic era, Clara Schumann's works range from solo piano pieces, chamber music, lieder, to orchestral works.

Table 3.1. "Lorelei," Clara Schumann, Summarization of Characteristics

"Lorelei," Clara Schumann	
Text Source	"Die Lorelei" (1824) by Heinrich Heine
Year of Composition	1843
Year of Publication	posthumously, 1990 (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel)
Form	Through-composed
Key	G Minor
Other Tonalities	B \flat Major, D Minor
Tempo	Quickly (<i>Schnell</i>)
Range	D4 to G5
<i>Tessitura</i>	F4 to Eb5
Vocal Line	Most of vocal line holds an arch-like shape in stepwise motion. Several of the leaps of an octave are intended for dramatic expression.
Accompaniment	Repetitive eighth note figures recur in a dense texture. The virtuosic keyboard accompaniment requires proper voicing and dynamic control to balance with the vocal line in the low and middle range.
Length	2' 10''
Level of Difficulty	Difficult/Advanced

In June of 1843, three years after her marriage to Robert, Clara Schumann set the Lorelei text as a birthday present for her husband.¹⁶⁶ At this time, their second daughter, Elise had recently been born, and Clara had finally reconciled with her father, Friedrich Wieck. However, under the pressure of Robert's manic depression, Clara felt depressed. Iitti states that “Clara suffered from melancholy... her pressures were never relieved by Robert’s constantly swinging moods.”¹⁶⁷ When one considers her autobiographical circumstances, Lorelei can be read as a warning toward Robert, whose developing mental illness seduced him to another world and alienated him from his family.¹⁶⁸ Additionally, her composition of Lorelei may also channel Clara’s own depressed and desperate sentiments.¹⁶⁹

Clara Schumann’s Interpretation of Lorelei

Through the form, the tempo, the vocal line, the piano part, and the musical *motif*, Clara Schumann describes Lorelei as a dreadful and fatal figure. Meanwhile, the speaker (or the narrator) is captivated by the tale of Lorelei and trembles with fear. Later, the speaker, who can be identified as the composer herself, shouts with terror as if the speaker collapses by the boatman’s death.

Schumann ignores the poetic frame narrative of Heine’s *Die Lorelei*, neither his stanzas nor the frame narrative. Instead, she adopts a through-composed form. From the onset, the singer immediately utters the text, sporadically interrupted by the short keyboard interludes. Also, the absence of an introduction intensifies the text statement and anxiousness portrayed in the keyboard. The first line of the text (“I do not know, what it means, that I should feel so sad”), combined with the musical setting is intentionally aggressive and surprising. Some authorities have even

¹⁶⁶ Iitti, *The Feminine in German Song*, 120.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 121.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

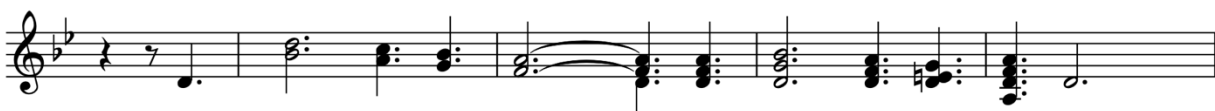
¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

commented that the opening music of this song is “violent” and recalls “a nightmare.”¹⁷⁰ In addition, the postlude plays a meaningful role in Clara’s “Lorelei.” For example, the dramatic six-measure postlude captures the struggles of the boatman after the shipwreck where Schumann vividly paints the picture of the boatman striving to survive, but eventually fails and drowns in the Rhine River. From the disturbing ending, the speaker and the audience are left in shock.

One of the major musical characteristics of her *Lieder* “Lorelei” is the varied and active piano part. The repetitive triplet figure found in the keyboard part occurs throughout the piece, resulting in an anxious and chaotic feeling delivered by the speaker. Several musicologists claim that the repeated triplets are reminiscent of the famous *Lieder* “Erlkönig” (1815) by Franz Schubert.¹⁷¹ Like that of the masterpiece by Schubert, Clara’s triplet figure creates terror and foreshadows the impending doom. Additionally, the strumming pattern of harp or lute appears in the piano part in measure 20-35. Though the Lorelei here does not carry any instruments, the composer may be aware of the Siren who is often portrayed holding a lyre.¹⁷² Furthermore, in measures 4-8, the Lorelei’s singing *motif* is found in the keyboard part. According to Youens, the virtuosic keyboard part reflects the composer’s own competency and technical skills on the piano.

This instrumental realization of siren song might seem to contradict the fact that the Lorelei’s fatal power resides in her voice, but Clara clearly took note of the wordless nature of such elemental song and invented the appropriate modern garb for the concept. And how fitting this is in a more personal sense as well: Clara’s voice, Clara’s power to enchant, was the piano.¹⁷³

Example 3.1. Lorelei’s singing *motif*, “Lorelei,” Clara Schumann, mm. 4-8



¹⁷⁰ Shin, “Music as a Social Mirror,” 30; Iitti, *The Feminine in German Song*, 125.

¹⁷¹ Youens, *Heine and the Lied*, 175, 253; Shin, “Music as a Social Mirror,” 30.

¹⁷² Iitti, *The Feminine in German Song*, 122.

¹⁷³ Youens, *Heine and the Lied*, 254.

Throughout the piece, Lorelei's singing *motif* appears four times. The keyboard part always precedes the vocal part, then repeats while doubling the vocal line. The composer deliberately set the text of the story, along with the melody of Lorelei on Lorelei's singing *motif*. The texts on this *motif* are "A tale from olden times that I cannot get out of my mind" (mm. 8-12) and "It has a wondrously powerful melody." (mm. 40-44). In the latter case, the word "wondrously" ("wundersame") is emphasized through accented low notes on D4. Doubled by the keyboard, the alarming low notes are used to warn the treacherous power of Lorelei's singing. (mm. 44) In Clara Schumann's perspective, Lorelei is a destructive and threatening presence of which people should be afraid. See Example 3.2.

Example 3.2. Destructively powerful melody, "Lorelei," Clara Schumann, mm. 40-44

The musical score for Example 3.2 shows measures 40-44 of Clara Schumann's 'Lorelei'. The vocal line is in G minor, 3/4 time. The lyrics are: 'das hat ei - ne wun - der - sa - me, ge - wal - ti - ge Me - lo - dei. Den'. The piano accompaniment features a prominent bass line with accented low notes on D4, emphasizing the 'wondrously' (wundersame) part of the text. The score is written for voice and piano.

In this piece, Schumann contrasts the musical writing of the vocal line against the virtuosic keyboard part. Overall, the vocal line holds an arch-like shape in stepwise motion. In measures 28, 45, 51, and 55, the vocal line repeats the same note as if the speaker is reciting the poem. Additionally, when Lorelei makes her appearance and the text describes her beauty (mm. 24), the

vocal line remains in the middle register (F4-A4). Following this section, Schumann creates the atmosphere through a difficult and demonstrative keyboard accompaniment (mm. 48). During this musical outburst and in these measures, Lorelei and the boatman are portrayed. To further stress the panic and urgency of the text, Schumann imposes a syllabic setting of the vocal line which remains in the low and middle ranges of the vocal part.

At the same time, in measure 48, the singer overpowers the piano part with an octave leap, soaring to G5 resulting to great effect, the importance which Schumann placed on this section in the song. The whole note on G5 in measure 48 is not easily heard; however, it grasps the listener's attention as it depicts the narrator's cry. Later, this same note (G5) appears again (mm. 61) when the text states "Loreley has done." Following, the descending and chromatic vocal line displays the sinking motion of the boat and expresses the nervous breakdown of the speaker who has become emotionally overwhelmed.

In conclusion, Clara Schumann's "Lorelei" consists of a restrained vocal part and a virtuosic keyboard part, reflecting the composer's identity as acclaimed concert pianist. The piece is written from the perspective of the speaker and is full of twists and turns/anxiety and sadness. From Schumann's perspective, Lorelei is the alluring but negative figure who brings destruction and death.

3.2. Franz Liszt, *Die Loreley*

Hungarian composer, Franz Liszt (1811-1886) was also a virtuoso pianist, arranger, conductor, and organist. He is best known for his groundbreaking piano performances, having been the first person to give a solo piano recital and many remembered him as the greatest pianist of his time.¹⁷⁴ Liszt's compositions were heavily influenced by fellow composers Hector Berlioz,

¹⁷⁴ Noreen C. Moodie, "Liszt's Songs: A Reflection of the Man and A Microcosm of His Musical Style," (Thesis, University of South Africa, 1996), 6.

Niccolò Paganini, and Frédéric Chopin. He is credited with developing the Symphonic poem, a single-movement piece for orchestra in which music relates to outside sources, such as poems, novels, paintings, or mythology. His vocal works range from *Lieder* which have been orchestrated as well as for voice with piano and multiple sacred choral works.

Table 3.2. “Die Loreley,” Franz Liszt, Summarization of Characteristics

“Die Loreley,” Franz Liszt	
Text Source	“Die Lorelei” (1824) by Heinrich Heine
Year of Composition	1854-56
Year of Publication	1856 (Berlin: Schlesinger)
Catalogue Number	S. 273/2
Form	Arch (ABCAB)
Key	G Major
Tempo	<i>Allegretto</i> and <i>Allegro agitato molto</i>
Range	Bb3 to Bb5
Tessitura	F4 to G5
Vocal Line	The song contains a variety of melodic style, such as declamatory, lyrical, syllabic, and melismatic line. Several extended vocal lines demand advanced techniques for a singer.
Accompaniment	The keyboard is closely interconnected with voice and contains many arpeggiated patterns. A dramatic atmosphere is created by the repeated eighth note figures, tremolo, and chromatic bass line.
Length	6’ 30’’
Level of Difficulty	Difficult/Advanced

Liszt’s setting of “Die Loreley” is deeply associated with Countess d’Agoult, with whom Liszt fell in love in his twenties. The scandalous affair with a married woman lasted ten years and they had three children. Liszt, Countess d’Agoult, and their children spent several summers on an

island at the Rhine River where he wrote the first version of “Die Loreley” (S. 273/1).¹⁷⁵ It was dedicated to the Countess, who was embodied as the beautiful and enchanting Lorelei by the composer. Thirteen years later, after his break-up with the Countess, he revisited the composition and wrote the second version (S. 273/2). Both versions are of similar structure and contain the same musical motifs, while the second version became one of his most well-known *Lieder* compositions. Additionally, Liszt transcribed the two versions for piano.

Franz Liszt’s Interpretation of Lorelei

Despite the tragic nature of the story, Liszt's song “Die Loreley” celebrates the beautiful and powerful Lorelei. At the beginning of the song, the tone of the speaker is melancholic. Then, beginning with the second stanza, we enter Lorelei’s realm where the composer musically captures the romantic and mysterious atmosphere of the Rhine River (measure 31). It is within this realm (Lorelei’s) where the story takes place and further unfolds in Lorelei’s point of view.¹⁷⁶ The musical theme of the peaceful Rhine River returns measure 107, after which the death of the sailor occurs. Regarding the return of the peaceful Rhine River, Woodall states that

Although she experiences some remorse and an identity crisis, she comes to the conclusion that what she has done is for the good of all and finds comfort in what she has done.¹⁷⁷

Contrary to Clara Schumann's “Lorelei,” the structure of Liszt's “Lorelei” reflects the frame narrative adopted by the poet Heinrich Heine.¹⁷⁸ To represent the 'frame' part of the narrative, Liszt uses declamatory vocal lines with a recitative-like keyboard part in measures 8-11 and 99-104 (See Example 3.3.) The first line of text, we hear the speaker expressing his emotions in a speech-like manner, stating “I do not know what it means that I should feel so sad.”

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 27.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 32.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 33.

¹⁷⁸ It is mentioned in Chapter 2.2 Heinrich Heine, Die Lorelei. Refer 31.

Example 3.3. Declamatory vocal line and recitative-like piano part, “Die Loreley,” Franz Liszt, mm. 8-11

p (gesprochen)

Ich weiss nicht, was soll's be-deu-ten, dass ich so trau-rig,

However, when the 'story' part of the narrative is heard, the music shifts to a more lyrical vocal line with a lavish accompaniment, resembling an operatic aria. See Example 3.4.

Example 3.4. Lyrical vocal line, “Die Loreley,” Franz Liszt, mm. 46-48¹⁷⁹

sun-set splen-dors shine, A-bend-son-nen-schein. With im

colla voce

The vocal line found in Liszt’s “Loreley” contains a variety of melodic styles such as declamatory, lyrical, syllabic, and melismatic. In her book *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, Carol Kimball introduces Derek Watson’s categorized “Lisztian melody” as follows:

- Lyrical, often ornamented, Romantic *bel canto* melodies
- Declamatory phrases that contain unusual intervals
- Monotone, recitative-like phrases with some melodic organization

¹⁷⁹ Franz Liszt, *Die Loreley*, trans. Arthur Westbrook (Boston: O. Ditson), 1902, IMSLP, accessed March 15, 2023, https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/8/8a/IMSLP04877-Liszt_-_S273_Die_Lorelei.pdf.

- Short melodic fragments in the style of Beethoven
- Melodies that are built primarily on descending intervals¹⁸⁰

In the case of “Die Loreley,” ornamented *bel canto* vocal lines are used to praise and adorn the iconic Lorelei character (mm. 43-44, 47-48, 61, 119-120, and 127-131) while the short and fragmented style is applied for the description of the tranquil landscape of the Rhine River (mm. 31-38) and the boatman with impending crisis (mm. 75-79). Liszt descriptively sets the poem to demonstrate the swallowing of the boatman and his boat when he writes descending melodic passages (mm. 86-92) when the speaker states “I think at last the waves swallow the boatman and his boat.” Otherwise, in this song, the vocal lines are predominantly ascending to reflect the character Lorelei who sits high on the rock cliff. According to Youens, Loreley is described to “melodic lines that yearn upwards, as if gazing at the cliff-top.”¹⁸¹ See Example 3.5.

Example 3.5. Ascending vocal line, “Die Loreley,” Franz Liszt, mm. 55-56



In disguise as a pure and harmless lady in the peaceful Rhine River, Liszt’s Lorelei deceives the sailor and the audience. The true key of the piece is G Major, however, Liszt

¹⁸⁰ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, rev ed. (Hal Leonard, 2005), 95; Derek Watson, *Liszt* (New York: Schirmer/Macmillan, 1989), 181.

¹⁸¹ Sousan Youens, Program notes to *Die Loreley*, S273 *Second Version*, sung by Andrew Kennedy, 2016, accessed April 2, 2023, https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dw.asp?dc=W16935_GBLH0915506.

intentionally avoid the G Major key and constantly modulate to distantly-related keys throughout the piece. Bass notes that

...the music, after only hinting at G major earlier in the song, finally confirms it as her “true” key after the action reveals the true nature of her character.¹⁸²

For example, Liszt modulates to E Major in the peaceful Rhine River section and to B \flat Major when Lorelei makes her appearance. In measure 62, he modulates again to D \flat Major to vividly capture her golden colored hair and comb. In addition, an arch-like shape is found in both the vocal and keyboard lines and describes the moment when Lorelei combs her hair. Also, with Liszt’s descriptive direction in the score (*sempre dolcissimo*), the image of the flowing river is portrayed. See Example 3.6.

Example 3.6. New key of D \flat Major, “Die Loreley,” Franz Liszt, mm. 62-63.

The image shows a musical score for Franz Liszt's "Die Loreley" in measures 62-63. The key signature is D-flat major (three flats). The tempo is marked "a tempo". The vocal line is marked "sempre dolce" and the piano accompaniment is marked "sempre dolcissimo". The lyrics are "Haar; sie kämmt es mit gold' - nem". The piano line features a prominent arch-like shape in the right hand, mirroring the vocal line. There are some markings like "And." and "*" below the piano line.

After the sailor is killed, Lorelei does not need to disguise herself any longer thus the true key of G Major can be revealed. Here, Woodall summarizes the characters of G Major:

For instance, G major meant “naïve, innocent, and rustic pleasures” to Vogler, “rustic, idyllic, calm, tender love” to Schubart, a “pleasant, rustic” sound to Knecht, and that which is “innocent, simple, [and] indifferent” to Galeazzi.¹⁸³

¹⁸² Richard Bass, Heather de Savage, and Patricia Grimm, “Harmonic Text-Painting in Franz Liszt’s *Lieder*,” *Gamut: Online Journal of the Music Theory Society of the Mid-Atlantic* 6, no. 1 (October 2013): 28.

¹⁸³ Woodall, “Examining the Lorelei Topos,” 40; Rita Steblin, *A History of Key Characteristics in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1983), 133.

When we consider that Liszt dedicated the first version of “Die Lorely” to his devoted lover, Countess Marie d’Agoult, it is an undebatable fact that his *Lied* celebrates the attractive and powerful Lorelei. The archetype Lorelei created by Liszt is a lofty goddess who resides from on high and has the capability of singing a wide variety of melody. (e.g. declamatory, lyrical, fragmented, long and short phrases) but who is also a deceitful *femme fatale*, cunningly disguising her fatal identity.

3.3. Alexander Zemlinsky, *Waldgespräch*

Alexander Zemlinsky (1871-1942) was an Austrian composer, conductor, and teacher. He was a leading musical figure in Vienna, whose music was admired by many of his contemporaries such as Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Weill. After studying piano and composition at Vienna Conservatory (1884-1892), Zemlinsky conducted in Vienna Volksoper, Prague State Opera, and Czech Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1933, after the passing of the law which prohibited Jews from being employed in state service, he had to resign his position in Berlin Music Academy. He exiled to Vienna and ended up fleeing to New York.¹⁸⁴ His representative works include *Lyric Symphony* (1924), and opera *Der Zwerg* (1922). Zemlinsky, an acknowledged accompanist, was also deeply interested in poetry and vocal music, writing 74 songs for piano and voice.¹⁸⁵ According to musicologist Theodor Adorno, “Zemlinsky’s works represent a bridge between the nineteenth-century romantic style and Schoenberg’s modernism, a crucial nexus between nineteenth-century *fin-de-siècle* music and the avantgarde of the twentieth century.”¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ “Biography,” Alexander Zemlinsky, accessed April 4, 2023, <http://www.zemlinsky.at/en/biographie/biographie>.

¹⁸⁵ Lorraine Gorrell, “The Songs of Alexander Zemlinsky,” *Journal of Singing* 62, no.2 (November/December 2005): 132.

¹⁸⁶ Lorraine Gorrell, Introduction to *Discordant Melody: Alexander Zemlinsky, His Songs, and the Second Viennese School* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), xiii.

Table 3.3. “Waldgespräch,” Alexander Zemlinsky, Summarization of Characteristics

“Waldgespräch,” Alexander Zemlinsky	
Text Source	“Waldesgespräch” (1815) by Joseph von Eichendorff
Year of Composition	1895-1896
Year of Publication	posthumously, 1995 (Ricordi)
Catalogue Number	Sy. 5027
Premiere	March 2, 1896, in Vienna
Key	G Minor
Tempo	Allegro Moderato, Andante, and Adagio
Range	D4 to B♭5
Tessitura	G4 to G5
Vocal Line	Mostly lyrical and long vocal line. Lorelei often sings in monotone.
Instrumentation	String Orchestra with Harp and Two Horns
Accompaniment	Leitmotif melodic figures, such as Hunting Horn <i>motif</i> and Lorelei <i>motif</i> , comprise the piece. Various musical elements include arpeggio patterns, tremolo, dotted rhythm figure, bass with staccato, etc. The piano reduction was created by Antony Beaumont.
Length	175 measures, 7’ 30’’

In 1890, Zemlinsky set Eichendorff’s poem “Waldgespräch” for piano and voice. Later, between 23 December 1895 and 3 January 1896, he revisited the poem and composed a ballade for soprano, strings, harp, and two horns.¹⁸⁷ When the work was premiered at its first concert on 2 March 1896 with an amateur orchestra Polyhymnia, Zemlinsky’s fiancée Melanie Gutmann was the vocal soloist and his friend Arnold Schoenberg played cello in the orchestra. Schoenberg later

¹⁸⁷ Gorrell, *Discordant Melody*, 148.

married Zemlinsky's sister, Mathilde.¹⁸⁸ After the premiere, there are no records of performance until 1995.¹⁸⁹

Only one edition of the score exists.¹⁹⁰ In the preface of the score of "Waldgespräch," the editor Antony Beaumont notes that the Symphony Orchestra of North German Radio made a studio recording on November 29, 1995, along with Edith Mathis as the vocal soloist and Beaumont as the conductor.¹⁹¹ There exist some recent recordings, but the song is still rarely performed.¹⁹²

Zemlinsky's Interpretation of Lorelei

In conformity with the structure of the poem "Waldesgespräch," Zemlinsky's composition of the Lorelei's story embodies the dramatic *scena*, or opera-like scene. In this version of the story, the knight does not hesitate to reveal his desire about the women he encounters in the woods. In measures 29-33, Zemlinsky's musical setting of the text "The forest is deep, you are alone" accurately represents what is in the deceitful man's mind. Here also, Zemlinsky writes a challenging vocal line for the knight, containing many leaps perhaps indicating the excitement the knight feels as he encounters the woman. Through the fluctuating melodies, the knight expresses his growing desire toward "the richly adorned" Lorelei. On the contrary to the vocal line of the knight, Lorelei effortlessly defeats the knight, by drawing him in with a simple monotone vocal line. See Example 3.7.

¹⁸⁸ Gorrell, *Discordant Melody*, 24.

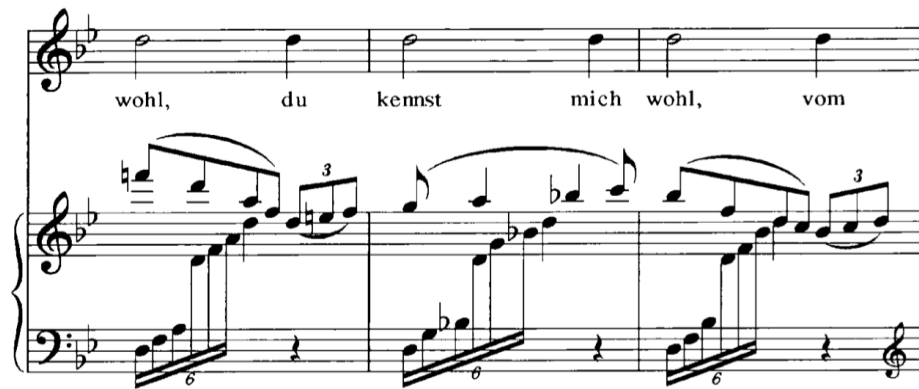
¹⁸⁹ Antony Beaumont, Preface to *Waldgespräch (Joseph von Eichendorff): Ballade für eine Sopranstimme*, (Munich: G. Ricordi & Co., 2000), iii.

¹⁹⁰ Alexander Zemlinsky, *Waldgespräch (Joseph von Eichendorff): Ballade für eine Sopranstimme, Streichorchester, Harfe und zwei Hörner, Klavierauszug*, ed. Antony Beaumont (Munich: G. Ricordi & Co. 2000).

¹⁹¹ Beaumont, *Waldgespräch*, iii.

¹⁹² *Clair-Obscur: Strauss, Berg, Zemlinsky*, Orchestre Victor Hugo, conducted by Jean François Verdier, sung by Sandrine Piau, recorded March 2020, Alpha Classics ALPHA 727, [2021], CD; *Zemlinsky: Orchestral Songs; Piano Works*, Köln Philharmonie, conducted by James Conlon, sung by Soile Isokoski, EMI Classics / Warner Classics 5099967843923, [2012], CD.

Example 3.7. Monotone vocal line, “Waldgespräch,” Alexander Zemlinsky, mm. 144-146



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The only time Lorelei becomes expressive and dramatic is when she tells of her sorrow and broken heart (mm. 65-69), and when she suggests the knight to flee (mm. 80-83). In short, Zemlinsky sympathizes with Lorelei while describing her alluring beauty. The simplistic ending of the song, now in G Major, perhaps establishes that the composer is on Lorelei's side. (mm. 173-174).¹⁹³

Following a 22-measure introduction, the first voice that is heard is that of the knight. The urgency of a repeated low note (D4) projects the feeling of breathlessness.

Example 3.8. Voice of Man, “Waldgespräch,” Alexander Zemlinsky, mm. 23-24

¹⁹³ Woodall, “Examining the Lorelei Topos,” 24.

After Lorelei captivates the knight, she musically mocks the knight's line, "It is already late, it is already cold," by singing the same rhythmic pattern, but in higher vocal range, thereby illustrating the 'Voice of Woman.' Furthermore, Zemlinsky emphasizes the end of the phrase "kalt" (cold) with extended note value and upper neighboring tone.

Example 3.9. Voice of Woman, "Waldgespräch," Alexander Zemlinsky, mm. 153-155

The musical score for Example 3.9 shows three measures of music. The vocal line is in a higher register and features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The lyrics are "Es ist schon spät, es ist schon kalt,". The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and single notes in both hands. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major), and the time signature is 3/4.

In the second stanza, an additional the auditory imagery is found in Eichendorff's poem, it is the hunting horn ("Waldhorn"). In measure 19-22, the hunting horn *motif* appears twice, right before the knight's first line "It is already late." It is as if the horn sounds a warning of the impending doom. See Example 3. 10.

Example 3.10. Hunting Horn *motif*, "Waldgespräch," Alexander Zemlinsky, mm. 15-22

The musical score for Example 3.10 shows four measures of music. The piano accompaniment features a strong, rhythmic motif in the right hand, marked with a forte (f) dynamic and the instruction "molto espr.". The left hand provides a more melodic line. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major), and the time signature is 3/4.

Later in measure 125-127, when the knight realizes that she is the witch Lorelei, the hunting horn *motif* reappears with a loud dynamic marking (*mezzo forte*). The *motif* returns at the end of the song when the text states “You shall never leave this forest again!” (mm. 164-166). Importantly, the hunting horn *motif* appears three times as follows: before Lorelei begins the hunt, when the knight finds out he is the victim, and after she traps her prey.

Example 3.8 shows the Lorelei *motif*, a musical representation of the Lorelei. When viewing example 3.8, note that in the orchestral version, the right hand of the keyboard part is played by solo violin and the left-hand keyboard part is played by the harp. Woodall points out that this *motif* embodies Lorelei’s femininity.

This honey-sweet and graceful melody has stylistic markers of beautiful femininity, such as luscious legato phrasing and delicately downward-floating figures.¹⁹⁴

Example 3.11. Lorelei *motif*, “Waldgespräch,” Alexander Zemlinsky, mm. 49-52¹⁹⁵



This *motif* reappears in the key of G Major when Lorelei states the fourth stanza. (mm. 141-150) Further, to illustrate the desired atmosphere and ‘color’ of the sound, Zemlinsky notates specific expression markings. See Table 3.4.

¹⁹⁴ Woodall, “Examining the Lorelei Topos,” 21.

¹⁹⁵ For the further analysis on various motifs appearing in Zemlinsky’s “Waldgespräch,” refer Woodall’s “Siren Song: Examining the Lorelei Topos,” 19-24.

Table 3.4. Expression Markings, “Waldgespräch,” Alexander Zemlinsky

Mm.	Expression Marking	English Translation	Text (English Translation)
39	<i>bestimmt</i>	determined	I will lead you home!
57	<i>tonlos</i>	tonelessly	Great is the cunning of men
61	<i>etwas gesteigert im Ausdruck</i>	slightly increased in expression	Great is the cunning of men
71	<i>Ruhig</i>	quietly, calmly	The hunting horn strays to and fro
80	<i>leidenschaftlich</i>	passionate	O flee!
83	<i>unheimlich leise</i>	very quiet	You do not know who I am
94	<i>wie in Bewunderung</i>	as if in admiration	So richly adorned
103	<i>steigernd</i>	increasing, swelling	So richly adorned
106	<i>mit großen Ausdruck</i>	with great expression	So wonderfully beautiful young body
109	<i>Fortwährend steigern</i>	constantly swelling	So wonderfully beautiful young body
116	<i>in größtem Affekt</i>	with biggest emotion	Now I know you,
123	<i>Sehr breit</i>	very broadly	You are the witch Lorelei!
142	<i>leise</i>	quietly	You know me well
166	<i>wie aus der Ferne</i>	as if from afar	You will never leave this forest
171	<i>morendo</i>	dying	N/A (postlude)

Alexander Zemlinsky's "Waldgespräch" is a masterpiece of late Romantic *Lieder* which presents his skillful use of recurring motives and detailed expression markings. Zemlinsky's interpretation of the Lorelei's story is an intriguing portrayal of the knight's growing desire and Lorelei's effortless defeat of him. Despite its brilliancy, the piece has received little attention from singers, musicologists, and audiences, and it deserves recognition and appreciation.

Conclusion

The *femme fatale* is a complex character who presents herself as both alluring and threatening. Though the archetype has evolved over time to reflect societal needs, she remains an enigmatic figure who is set apart from ordinary women. Her deceptive behavior often masks her own self-interest, leaving her true motives and intentions shrouded in mystery. During the Nineteenth century, the enduring popularity of the *femme fatale* was a product of the social climate in which the emergence of the 'New Woman' challenged traditional social norms.

After its creation by Clemens Brentano, Lorelei has been shaped as a powerful and legendary *Wasserfrau* figure in German speaking lands. Lorelei embodies the characteristics of the *femme fatale*, including physical seductiveness, destructive nature, and identity as a sorceress/witch. She also reflects the archetypes of Siren and Eve. Among many literary works on the story of Lorelei, Heinrich Heine's "Die Lorelei" gained widespread popularity in Germany and established the Lorelei as a symbol of patriotism, with many people seeing her as a guardian of the Rhine River. On the other hand, Eichendorff's "Waldesgespräch" portrays Lorelei as a heathen witch appearing in the forest at night. Eichendorff's version of Lorelei acts as a symbol of the "Countess Romana," a *femme fatale* character in his novel *Ahnung und Gegenwart*.

The three musical settings of Lorelei express various interpretations. Clara Schumann's "Lorelei" is full of anxiety, as if the composer is concerned about her husband's mental illness and conveys a warning about a seductive Lorelei. On the contrary, Franz Liszt's "Die Loreley" depicts glorious and powerful Lorelei with grand vocal lines and constant key modulations which enhance the excitement of the composition. The piano reduction of the orchestral setting of "Waldgespräch" by Austrian composer Alexander Zemlinsky, captures the conversation in the woods and contains recurring motives.

Through the various manifestations of the *femme fatale* and *Lorelei* character, we increase our understanding of the prevalence of the archetype in classical vocal music. This research will be beneficial to performers, teachers, and researchers interested in understanding these archetypes in music. It is hoped that this document will stimulate further exploration of other archetypes in the genre of Art Song, thereby expanding our understanding of how characters and themes are translated into musical compositions.

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