

## Unchanging Gender Roles in Changing Digital Media Age: An Analysis of the Netflix Series "Lucifer" in terms of Femme Fatale

*Değişen Dijital Medya Çağında Değiş(e)meyen Toplumsal Cinsiyet Rollerini: Femme Fatale Bağlamında Bir Netflix Dizisi Olan Lucifer'e Dair Bir İnceleme*

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### Highlights:

- In this study, the reflections of changing and transforming ownership structures on digital media are scrutinized with the help of descriptive analysis in the context of femininity roles and the identity of *femme fatale* in the context of *Lucifer*, a Netflix series.
- The possibility that new media can have a transformative effect and address the roles of femininity in an unprejudiced, realistic and egalitarian context has been refuted in the case of the *Lucifer* series in this study.
- This study is considered as a substantial work as it reveals that digital channels function similarly to traditional media tools in terms of gender roles.

**Abstract:** Cinema and television series have functioned as a kind of mirror of almost all societies since their first invention because they cover various issues that concern human beings. Cinematic thoughts, experiences, digital and visual images in television series accompany almost any transformation that takes place in any community. Considering the assumption that the digital age gradually transforms and develops many habits, trends and even social roles in life and creates the potential to create awareness in individuals, it is thought that it is possible that the roles of femininity and masculinity will change to a certain extent with digital media. In fact, based on the argument that some digital platforms have the potential to indirectly challenge the toxic male-dominated structure of the past, it is possible to expect gender roles to function more realistically and in harmony with the changing social structure than before, and even to act in favor of women in digital media. However, despite the radical change created by the new media through digital platforms, some issues such as gender roles or stereotypes about women have not changed positively. So much so that in the age of digital media, it can be seen that women are depicted in the background compared to the depiction of men. In this context, the main purpose of this study is to emphasize this issue and to underline that the positive influence on women's roles is quite limited despite the social alterations created by the great changes in the digital media age. For this purpose, Netflix's famous series *Lucifer* has been scrutinized in terms of the *femme fatale* character with the help of descriptive analysis, thus certain categories of femininity have been created and it has been seen that female figures in *Lucifer* are depicted as either humiliated, evil or a threat. From this point of view, it would not be wrong to say that the changing

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digital film and publishing trends do not significantly affect the representation of women in the world of cinema.

**Keywords:** Gender, Series, Digital Media, Femme Fatale, Lucifer.

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**Öne Çıkanlar:**

- Bu çalışmada, değişen ve dönüşen sahiplik yapılarının dijital mecralara olan yansımaları, kadınlık rolleri bağlamında ve bir Netflix dizisi olan *Lucifer* çerçevesinde ve *femme fatale* kimliği bağlamında betimsel analiz yardımıyla ele alınmıştır.
- Yeni medyanın dönüştürücü bir etki ile kadınlığa dair rolleri önyargısız, gerçekçi ve eşitlikçi bir bağlamda ele alma ihtimali bu çalışmada *Lucifer* dizisi örnekleme özelinde çürütülmüştür.
- Bu çalışma, toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri hususunda, dijital mecraların geleneksel medya araçları ile benzer şekilde işlev gösterdiğini ortaya koyması sebebiyle önemli bir çalışma olarak görülmektedir.

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**Öz:** Sinema ve televizyon dizileri, insanlığı ilgilendiren çeşitli konuları kapsamaları nedeniyle ilk icadından itibaren hemen tüm toplumların bir nevi aynası olarak işlev görmektedir. Televizyon dizilerindeki sinematik düşünceler, deneyimler, dijital ve görsel imgeler, herhangi bir toplulukta gerçekleşen neredeyse tüm dönüşümlere eşlik eder. Dijital çağın hayata dair birçok alışkanlığı, eğilimi hatta sosyal rolleri kademeli olarak dönüştürdüğü, geliştirdiği, bireylerde farkındalık yaratma potansiyeli yarattığı varsayımı hesaba katıldığında, kadınlık ve erkeklik rollerinin de dijital medya ile belirli ölçüde değişmesinin olası olduğu düşünülmektedir. Hatta bazı dijital platformların geçmişin toksik erkek egemen yapılanmasına dair dolaylı bir meydan okuma potansiyeli olduğu savından hareketle, toplumsal cinsiyet rollerinin eskiye oranla daha gerçekçi ve değişen toplumsal yapıya uyumlu şekilde işlenmesini hatta dijital mecralarda kadının lehine olacak şekilde hareket etmesini beklemek olasıdır. Ancak yeni medyanın dijital platformlar aracılığıyla yarattığı köklü değişime karşın, toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri veya kadınlara ilişkin kalıp yargılar gibi bazı konular olumlu yönde değişmemiştir. Öyle ki, dijital medya çağında, kadınların erkek tasvirine kıyasla daha geri planda tasvir edildiği görülebilmektedir. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışmanın temel amacı, bu konuyu vurgulamak ve dijital medya çağında yaşanan büyük değişimlerin yarattığı sosyal değişimlere karşın kadın rollerine olan olumlu etkinin oldukça sınırlı olduğunun altını çizmektir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda Netflix'in ünlü dizisi *Lucifer*, *femme fatale* karakteri açısından betimsel analiz yardımıyla incelenmiş, kadınlığa dair belirli kategoriler oluşturulmuş ve *Lucifer*'de kadın figürlerinin ya aşağılanan ya şeytani ya da bir tehdit unsuru olarak tasvir edildiği görülmüştür. Dolayısıyla kadınlık rollerini daha gerçekçi ve özüne uygun şekilde sunma potansiyeli olabileceği düşünülen dijital platformların bu bağlamdan oldukça uzak olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Toplumsal Cinsiyet, Dizi, Dijital Medya, Femme Fatale, Lucifer.

### Genişletilmiş Türkçe Özet

Günümüzde dönüşen ve yenilenen medya araçları ana akım iletişim araçları olarak bilinen televizyon, radyo, gazete ve dergi gibi oluşumlardan farklı bileşenlere sahip yeni mecralar olarak evrenimize eklemlenmektedir. Yeni medya ya da dijital medya araçları bir dönüşüm örüntüsünün son halkası olarak oldukça güçlü ve etkin bir yapı şeklinde insanların evreninde kendine yer bulmuş, hatta geleneksel medya araçlarının belirli ölçüde ikinci planda kalmasına neden olmuştur.

Gerek sinema alanında gerekse televizyon sektöründe önemli bir değişimin önünü açan bu dijital yenilenme evreni doğal olarak toplumsal, kültürel, sosyal yapılar ile ilgili de bir tür dönüşüm ihtimalini beraberinde getirmiştir. Ancak bu güçlü beklentinin karşılanması ciddi anlamda zihinsel ve kültürel bir dönüşümü de beraberinde gerektirmektedir.

Geleneksel medya araçları çoğu kez devlet kontrolünde ilerleyen, yayın ya da haber akışlarını belirli bir düzlemin içerisinde sürdüren ya da sürdürmek zorunda kalan yapılarıdır. Bu nedenle klasik medya araçlarında, güçlü, muhalif seslere, devrimsel değişikliklere ya da alışlagelmiş normlara yönelik şiddetli eleştiriler görmek pek olası değildir. Hatta geleneksel medya neredeyse çoğu kez geçmişten gelenin bir tür koruyucusu ya da katalizörü olarak işlev görür ve alışlagelmiş normların sürdürülmesinde güçlü bir unsur olarak hareket eder. Söz konusu kadınlık ve erkeklik rollerinin medyaya yansıtılması olduğunda da benzer bir durumla karşılaşılması olasıdır. Geleneksel medya araçları, geçmişin etkilerini şimdinin evrenine taşır ve patriyarkal ve fallus merkezli toplumsal yapının korunmasını mümkün kılar.

Yeni medyanın 2000'li yılların başlarından itibaren günlük hayatlarımıza sızmasıyla beraber yaşamlarımızın daha dijital bir evrene doğru evrildiğini iddia etmek mümkündür. Dolayısıyla bu durumun kültürel ve geleneksel pratiklere de bir şekilde etki etmesi beklenebilir. Bu bağlamda yeni medyanın ve dijital platformların değişen sahiplik yapıları, bu platformların atarerkil bir bağlamdan sıyrılmasını mümkün hale getirelebilmiş midir? Ayrıca bu yeni platformlar kadına dair olanı özüne uygun şekilde yanıtma potansiyeli barındırmakta mıdır? soruları bu araştırmanın problem durumunu teşkil etmektedir. Bir başka deyişle, bu çalışma dijitalleşen iletişim araçları ve dönüşen kitle iletişim araçlarının geçmişin heteronormatif erkek egemen bağlamını bükme, esnetme, değiştirme ya da yenileme potansiyeline sahip midir? yoksa bu yapılar geçmişin patriyarkal düzleminin devamı niteliğinde midir? sorularına cevap aramaktadır.

Bu çalışma ilgili sorunun ne derece pratiğe yansıdığını ortaya koymak için dijital platformların en popüler mecralarından biri olan Netflix'i kendine örnek alanı olarak belirlemiş ve yine son dönemin en çok reyting alan dizilerinden biri olan *Lucifer* kasti örneklem yöntemiyle seçilmiştir. Mecra olarak Netflix'in seçilmesindeki ana neden ilgili mecranın dijital anlamda öncü olmasıdır. İlgili dizinin ilk iki sezonu detaylı şekilde incelenmiş ve yalnızca *Lucifer* Morningstar karakteri ve onun etrafındaki ana kadın karakterler belirli kategoriler oluşturularak betimsel analize tabi tutulmuştur. Kadın karakterlerin incelenmesinde ise *Kara Film*'den hatırlanacak olan *femme fatale* bağlam olarak belirlenmiş ve dijital alan evreninde kadına dair olanın dönüşümsel bir süreçte dâhil edilip edilmediğine dair cevaplar aranmıştır. *Femme fatale*'in seçilmesinde temel

neden ise *Lucifer* dizisindeki birçok kadın karakterin *femme fatale*'e dair bazı özellikler barındırmasından kaynaklanmaktadır.

Dizi analizi öncesinde ise toplumsal cinsiyet kavramı, kadınlık ve erkeklik rolleri, geleneksel medya, yeni medya ve bu mecraların kadına dair yükledikleri anlamlar ortaya konulmaya çalışılmış, *femme fatale* kavramının bağlamının anlaşılabilmesi adına ise *Kara Film* ve *Yeni Kara Film*'e dair genel bir çerçeve çizilmiştir. Ayrıca *Lucifer*'ın ne gibi alt anlamlara sahip olduğunun daha net kavranabilmesi için *Lucifer*'a dair dinsel ve mitsel bir bölüm eklenmiştir. Böylelikle dijital çağın kadınlık ve erkeklik rolleriyle ilgili dönüşüm potansiyeli tartışılmıştır.

Çalışmanın analizinde yeni medyanın ve dijital platformların sahiplik yapılarının değişmesi ve bu platformların çok yönlü yapımlar barındırması nedeniyle bireylerde ve toplumlarda kadınlık ve erkeklik rolleri hususunda bir farkındalık yaratma potansiyeli olup olmadığı sorgulanmıştır. Bu noktada bu düşüncenin altında yatan ana düşünce, kalıplaşmış toplumsal rollerin pekişmesinde medya nasıl güçlü bir işlev görüyorsa, yine köklü bir değişim noktasında da dijital platformların dolaylı da olsa katkısı olabileceği argümanından kaynaklanmaktadır. Fakat bu beklentinin Netflix ve *Lucifer* dizisi özelinde karşılanmadığı gözlemlenmiştir. Öyle ki Tanrı tarafından cennetten kovulan ve kötülük ile kodlanan *Lucifer Morningstar*, dizinin birinci ve ikinci sezonunda sevdiği kadınlar tarafından aldatılan, mağdur edilen bir erkek olarak yansıtılmaktadır. Filmin en belirgin kadın karakteri *Chloe* güçlü bir kadın figürü olarak yansıtılsa ve başarılı bir kadın dedektif olarak dizi de yer alsa da çoğu cinayeti ancak ve ancak *Lucifer*'ın yardımıyla çözebilmektedir. Ayrıca *Chloe*'nun annelik rolü de dizide oldukça baskın şekilde vurgulanmaktadır.

Bunun yanı sıra, *Lucifer*'ın annesi *Charlotte* eril bir bakış açısıyla erotize edilmekte, Tanrı ise erkeklik kodları ile dizide yer almaktadır. Buna ek olarak, dizideki çoğu kadın eril bakışın izlerini taşımakta, bedenselleştirilen ve cinsel bir obje haline dönüştürülen sekanslarla izleyici ile buluşturulmaktadır. Kadınlığın dizideki tasvirlerinde ayrıca geçmişten bu yana patriyarkal düzlemin dışında kaldığı için korkulan, çekinilen *femme fatale* kadın kimliğine dair göndermeler görülmektedir. Ölümcül, cazibeli, çekici kadın kimliği olarak bilinen *femme fatale*'in yansımaları bu dizi özelinde birçok kadın karakterde görülmüştür. Örneğin, *Chloe femme fatale* özellikler barındırmakta, *Lucifer*'ın aklını başından alan kadın olarak da, ona ihanet eden kadın olarak da dizi içerisinde görülmektedir.

Görüldüğü üzere, *Lucifer* dijital medya çağının reytingi en yüksek yapımlarından biri olarak toksik erkekliğin taşıyıcısı, pekiştiricisi ya da ataerkil düzlemin yeniden inşasında aracı görev üstlenen bir yapımların dijital mecralarda farklı ve özgür bir alan yaratması, öte yandan geleneksel medyada yer alan platformlarda daha

önceden pek kabul görmeyen kadınlık ve erkeklik rollerinin (güçlü, başarılı kadın kimliği ya da kaybeden, sorunlu erkek kimliği gibi) yeni dijital mecralarda daha sık gösterilir olması sayesinde, toplumsal cinsiyet rollerinin daha gerçekçi ve eşitlikçi şekilde sunabileceği savı bu açıdan bakıldığında karşılıksız kalmıştır. Dolayısıyla bir dijital mecra olarak Netflix ve bir yapım olarak *Lucifer*, toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri hususunda bir dönüştürücülük potansiyeli taşımamakta, aksine geleneksel kodların sürdürülmesi, pekiştirilmesi hatta yeniden kurulması noktasında erkek egemen yapının lehine şekilde işlev göstermektedir. Dolayısıyla bu çalışma özelinde değişen teknoloji ve iletişim araçlarının kadınlık ve erkeklik rollerine dair kapsamlı bir dönüşüm yaratamadığını iddia etmek mümkündür.

### **Introduction**

Despite altering time, some stereotypes are so strict that changing them requires extra effort, much struggle, and an utter revolution in notions. If the stereotypes belong to women and their manners, then the shift pertaining to cliché roles is harsher and necessitates a complex process. With the advancement of women's rights, we have had the possibility to monitor some improvements and transformations, yet raunch culture reverts it exponentially. The new trends in media are supposed to be the medium where the old stereotypes are vanished or upended, and it must be a platform which derives from a new stance. The reason for this expectation is that roles defined to gender are changing. Women are more free to speak, more active to defend themselves or more alert to toxic masculine tendencies with the aid of social media. Nevertheless, the digital media era has not made an enormous difference with regard to inclinations involving too much segregation or stigmatization of women. On the contrary, they have been reproducing them with some iterant elements hidden in the cinema or television industry.

Gender roles, often defined as social roles imposed on men and women by any society, also promote the settled ideas which have been rooted ontologically (Krijenen, 2020, p. 1). They directly or indirectly have an impact on the way how individuals perceive, interpret or make out the general principles related to what a woman has to do or how a man must behave. This reflection usually gains ground on media tools and it indicates that this is the attitude which is intrinsic and approved by communities every time. However, it effectuates bias or forms misconceptions about gender, especially women.

Once cinema and television programmes intermingle and reflect the roles in this direction, then they reinforce the preconceptions and this makes everything more complex and harsher. Transformations in digital media may be seen as a milestone having the potential to invert the problematic roles ascribed to women for years. Nevertheless, the reality does not seem like that

and the denigration of women in media is present in digital media and other digital platforms (Barnes-Smith, 2015, p. 7). Most series include stories from past myths, yet while they deal with them, we can expect that these stories ought to be conveyed to audiences with modern-age inclinations, but unfortunately, most of the cult figures pertaining to women are still portrayed arrantly, not with the essence women have. *That is*.

One of the most pivotal figures in terms of subordination of femininity is the *femme fatale*, accepted as one of the most appealing characters of modern cinema history. Being considered one of the most infusive genres, *Film-Noir* created *femme fatale* who mostly has been frightened, but at the same time desired by men. Indeed, this sexy, attractive and electric female depiction has been transformed into *abête noire* (Barnes-Smith, 2015, p. 5-10). *Much as the femme fatale has dated back to the beginning of the 1950s, her representation in the film or television industry is still prevalent due to her high rating and the tension she creates. Nevertheless, it is highly possible to notice a new approach to her depiction. In terms of this framework, this study aims to dwell on the femme fatale within the famous television series Lucifer broadcast on the digital media platform Netflix by comparing and contrasting previous representations of femme fatale in older films or productions and indicating how femininity is discriminated against masculine fears and deeds. The sample has been selected via purposeful sampling.*

However, before focusing on the analysis of the *femme fatale* and Lucifer correlation, I am going to accentuate some significant concepts such as the features of mainstream media, digital media, new media and gender, and characteristics of the *femme fatale* related to *Film Noir* and *Neo-Noir*. The method will be descriptive analysis and it will only be restricted to female characters involving *femme fatale* connotations in *Lucifer*. There will be three categories to point out how womanhood is portrayed in the series. The study will solely deal with the first and the second season of the series to indicate how womanhood is derogated in *Lucifer*.

### **Stereotypes about Women in Traditional Media Tools and Gender**

Gender is different from biological connotations and focuses on social roles attributed to women and men. Whereas sex as a term is utilised so as to define whether a person is male or female biologically, gender is nearly utterly comprised of cultural, socio-economical, and traditional roots (Bingöl, 2014, p. 109). Cinema as an art reflects gender roles remarkably and has a grand potential to bend the negative references defined for womanhood and manhood. Nonetheless, this potential is usually underestimated when the matter is women and their real potential and essence as an individual. The prevalent system often elucidates conventional and institutional possibilities related to gender.

Traditional media tools can be defined as television, newspaper, magazine or radio and they are the extensions of mass media (Polat, 2018, p. 45). Mass media tools own a great potential to influence tendencies in a specific community due to the fact that they are almost everywhere we look. Advertisements we look over, the tv series we constantly watch without getting tired, or the magazines we follow regularly all compose our perceptions of the world we live in. Owing to this, they shape a number of habits, from our consumption inclinations to social roles, beliefs, hopes and lifestyles. What's more, these tools are the bridges where social constructions are formed, communication systems established and conventional possibilities are sustained. Therefore, it is almost out of question to think of an order formed without the effect of mainstream media.

Manufacturing consent is crucial in a community where the dominant power demands to maintain its system, yet any marginal or unusual reactions occasionally are condemned and have no representation on the agenda. Shifting, transforming or altering deep-seated conceptions necessitates too much time and effort. Indeed, the mainstream media generally cooperates with the current ideology and sometimes functions as an ideological tool as Althusser asserts (Güngör, 2018, p. 284). Democracy, equality or other discourses with regard to creating an area for liberal notions are spoken in a constricted way. The hegemonic establishments are not very eager to put up with riots, revolutions or demonstrations concerning radical changes (Güngör, 2018, p. 404-405).

It is possible to claim that the mainstream structure is often based on a heteronormative perspective. Lots of representations seen on television or in newspapers are managed within a specific point of view, which is generally against women. With the advent of new discourses developed in the new media era, there is a huge potential to speak up freely to protect women's essence related to their ideas and bodies. Nevertheless, it should be noted that new media is still controlled by huge and private companies and their discourses are still effective in how gender roles are reflected in cinema or television. Therefore, the expectations related to the potential of new media on women might turn out a disappointment.

### **Characteristics of Digital Media and Reflections of Womanhood in New Media**

Digital media is defined as "video, audio, software, or other content that is created, edited, stored, or accessed in digital form, through numeric encoding and decoding of data" (Manovich, 2001, p. 19). This online media opened a new era in the field of communication, correspondence, media production and consumption ways and habits. In other words, it altered our approaches, understanding and cognitive skills (Tocci and Widmer, 2007, p. 12). Thus, it has been accepted and utilised swiftly even if it is a new transformation process. Digital media has turned into a sort

of power affecting popular culture and its current ideology radically. The media content produced by the users has become our new reality (Popa and Gavrilu, 2014, p. 1203). To demonstrate, individuals have more possibilities to share their ideas freely and have more options to watch different platforms owning various ideologies or stances. From my point of view, this may enhance gender roles in media even if lots of commercial series or programmes still carry a patriarchal perspective.

The trend related to new media is gaining strength day by day and it seems that grasping its specific features seems a must. Digital Media systems are multimedia and this enables to create almost infinite outputs. Packet switching, hypertext, synchronization, mutual interactivity, functioning without massifying, creating a new sort of public sphere, the potential to form equality between different classes, and giving extra room for democracy can be pointed out as some striking features of new media (Gülner ve Balcı, 2011, p. 71-78). In addition to these traits, individualism, intricacy between public and private spheres, providing lots of information, creating a difference in ownership structure, possibility to alter the messages are the other outstanding elements that digital media tools own. (Güngör, 2018, p. 400-402). On the other hand, globalised and digitalised media communication have an enormous potential to disseminate the accepted norms, moral values and their possible impulses, current political issues and consolidation of the so-called hegemony (Radošinská and Višňovský, 2016, p. 85).

It is an undeniable fact that it functions as a complete revolution concerning our relation to technology, access to information and communication with each other. Nonetheless, has this radical shift changed what people have believed and pursued for ages or has digital media been converted and adapted according to the hegemonic powers and their beliefs, systems and norms? This is a crucial question to understand the concept of gender, womanhood, discrimination and stigmatization of women.

Despite immense alterations occurring in the fields of communication and technology, it is possible to allege that all these transformations have not formed a huge difference in how people perceive gender roles. This is closely related to the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity, a term getting its roots in the writing of Gramsci and first propounded by Connel, can be defined as “a set of values, established by men in power that functions to include and exclude, and to organize society in gender unequal ways. It combines several features: a hierarchy of masculinities, differential access among men to power (over women and other men), and the interplay between men’s identity, men’s ideals, interactions, power, and patriarchy” (Jewked and Morrell, p. 2012: 40). Hegemonic masculinity has been dominant for ages and much as the digital

media period has changed our social habits considerably, most manners, norms, rules, beliefs or traditions dating back to the past are still alive and they are as strong as the previous eras. Namely, changing ownerships, and improving perspectives related to womanhood or consciousness created by educational institutions might be a solution to reflect womanhood in media truly. However, it is crucial to express that the structure of digital media tools made it possible to form a kind of power area where women are able to make their voices heard and feminist groups are alert against the patriarchal pressure created on social media. Nevertheless, the representation of gender is still parallel to what we have observed since old times.

Apart from social media, the digital media age has also transformed the cinema and television industry. Netflix, Amazon Prime, Crunchy Roll, BFI Player and other local platforms such as Blu Tv, and MUBI have replaced traditional cinema and television channels, especially with the impact of COVID-19. Thus, these platforms are the centers of digital media in terms of watching films or series.

These platforms naturally are the new carriers of the ideologies of the societies. What really matters here is how women are portrayed in the films or the series broadcast on these new platforms. Although it is doable to watch lots of avant-garde or feminist movies, the majority of productions have still traces of conventional stances including a masculine point of view. Because of this, many productions, particularly television series portray women in a negative way.

Most series contain a male gaze and lots of television stars are depicted as sexy, hot or evil-like figures enabling women to be seen as an object of desire. For instance, some cult and notorious characters such as the *femme fatale* have been revived with the aid of these digital platforms, yet they have been portrayed worse than past and womanhood in digital formations seems to be stigmatized. Consequently, changing digital platforms are not sufficient to form a complete revolution with regard to accepted gender roles and their probable connotations as they are still managed by a kind of phallogentric culture. That is, even though digital platforms might be seen as a new door to create consciousness about the essence of gender roles, particularly women with the help of changing ownerships and different stances of these platforms, it seems that this has not happened until now.

### ***Film Noir, Neo-Noir, and Femme Fatale***

*Film Noir* as a genre or a tone has an old history dating back to the sixteenth and seventeenth-century English literature and most of the films shot in this framework received inspiration from the books known as *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) by Horace Walpole and *The*

*Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841) by Edgar Allen Poe (Fay and Nieland, 2014, p. 240). Thus, it is possible to say that *Film Noir* has got its roots in literature.

*Film Noir* in the cinematic universe was defined by Nino Frank after the Second World War. As a French critic, Frank noticed a new kind of style in these films. According to Frank, the term *Film Noir* actually involved almost all American crime stories. *Film Noir* was shaped in the shadow of German Expressionism, the French Realists, American mainstream gangster films and hard-boiled literature and all these movements or factors created the general features of a *Film Noir* production. Also, the impact of the Second World War and its potential traumas on the American people as well as the Great Depression in the 1930s helped the formation of this tone having lots of subgenres (Duncan, 2006, p. 16-17).

As a romantic rebellion against Hollywood cliches, *Film Noir* has its unique peculiarities (Naremore, 1996, p. 28-30 ). Confusion, oddness, eroticism, being imaginary and truculence are some main elements which are easy to recognise in most of the examples in terms of *Film Noir* (Dimendberg, 2004, p. 4). Almost all *Film Noir* films have a pessimistic atmosphere and disappointment is one of the most outstanding emotions felt by the audience. Besides *femme fatale* and corrupted detectives in a corrupted community, murder, dark streets, smoke, dark shadows, mystic events, Venetian Blinds, rouge stains, the contrast between white and dark, intricate plots, flashbacks, nihilistic attributions, low camera angles are some basic characteristics belong to *Film Noir* (Yücel, 2019).

On account of its popularity, *Film Noir* has a number of subgenres such as *Docu-Noir*, *Amnesia Noir*, *Western Noir*, *Sci-Fi Noir*, *White Noir* and *Country Noir*. Most well-known examples of *Film Noir* are *Citizen Kane* by Orson Welles (1941), *The Maltese Falcon* by John Huston (1941), *Double Indemnity* by Billy Wilder (1944), *It is a Wonderful Life* by Frank Capra (1946) and *Sunset Boulevard* by Billy Wilder (1950) and these productions turned into milestones determining the future forms of cinematic stances (Tanrıdağlı, 2007, p. 10-11).

Another important point worth mentioning is Neo-Noir and its traits. The beginning of Neo-Noir is accepted as *Chinatown* (1974) by Roman Polanski. *Neo-Noir* movies were common during the 1970s and 1980s. As an extension of *Film Noir*, Neo-Noir differs in some aspects. Neo-Noirs often have similar elements compared to *Film Noir*, yet Neo-Noir has more violence, blood, sex, death and betrayal. (Bakır and Onat, 2015, p. 82-83).

In Neo-Noir, corruption and decay in society are two blazing themes. *Femme fatale* and the anti-hero detective are also crucial in these modern noirs. Neo-Noirs are technically a bit different from classical noir in terms of lighting and camera directions and angles. What's more, Neo-Noir

has more philosophical connotations and it strives to build its own perspective instead of repeating the other contemporaries. Most famous examples of this subgenre can be indicated as *Taxi Driver* by Martin Scorsese (1976), *House of Games* by David Mamet (1987), *Reservoir Dogs* by Quentin Tarantino (1991), *Basic Instinct* by Paul Verhoeven (1992), *Seven* by David Fichner (1995), *Mulholland Drive* by David Lynch (2001) and *Shutter Island* by Martin Scorsese (2010).

Film Noir and Neo-Noir have such a huge impact on the cinema and television industry that hundreds of films emulate these tones. Even most crime stories or murder stories are still formed by getting inspiration from Film Noir. When it comes to gender, Film Noirs own a profound effect on the formation of social roles, expectations from men and women, general depiction of a classical woman versus *femme fatale*, masculine fears and their reflections on the cinema. Indeed, the *femme fatale* is an outcome of manhood's desires and fears after the Second World War.

*Femme fatale* can be described with some specific traits. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, *femme fatale* is defined as either "a seductive woman who lures men into dangerous or compromising situations" or "a woman who attracts men by an aura of charm and mystery". As it is clear in the definition, there are some concerns, fears and hatred towards this strong character. In fact, the *femme fatale* and the roles attributed to her include some ideological codes since most literature texts and academic works assert that the *femme fatale* is the figure formed with concerns against modernism, feminist movements, and strong woman myth. *Femme fatale* is shaped by distrust owing to masculine paranoias. As lots of American men were convinced that they had been betrayed by their wives during the Second World War, this fear created a *femme fatale* and she instantly became the most sensational figure in the cinematic universe (Arpacı, 2019, p. 141).

Describing a *femme fatale* character in *Film Noir* or *Neo-Noir* is highly doable as she has a unique personality and appealing beauty. At this juncture, most *femme fatales* are so seductive that they can tempt or manipulate nearly all men. Also, they mostly have a thin neck, a sexy body, a tight red dress, high-heel shoes, blond hair, and black lace gloves. Moreover, they seem very self-confident, brave, decisive and stirring. Owing to these features, men can not stop loving them and obeying what they desire. Thus, *femme fatales* are the women who are able to manipulate males with their extraordinary sex appeal and great wit simply (Bade, 1979, p. 15-16). Mary Astor, Marilyn Monroe, Rita Hayworth, Ava Gardner, Gloria Swanson, and Kim Novak may be demonstrated as leading and notorious *femme fatale* actresses.

*Femme fatale* actually is an anti-hero and is against the general norms or traditions of classical American society. An American woman is often associated with motherhood or being a housewife, not a criminal or being seductive. Nevertheless, *femme fatales* are the women that go beyond the rules, codes or expectations and this makes men fear them in view of the fact that masculinity is afraid of losing their power and superiority over womanhood established for centuries. (Özkantar, 2022, p. 240). This anxiety directly or indirectly forms a sort of defence mechanism to avert losing power. For this purpose, the *femme fatale* is the symbol of patriarchal fears, masculine anxieties, and impotency, yet cinema and television production are utilised to suppress these concerns

In this direction, *femme fatales* are usually demonstrated with demonic traits to legitimate what manhood believes in related to women. Besides, they usually betray the men who trust them, but most *femme fatales* pass away or are sentenced to prison at the end of the films meaning that the character against the system has to be punished or adjusted according to the accepted norms or conventions in a community.

### **A Brief Information About Lucifer Myth**

Lucifer, also known or described as satan in some resources, means daylight or light-bearer in Latin and it used to have positive connotations. Both Torah and Bible mention him as Lucifer and they refer to him surprisingly positive, for he is charming, handsome and habilimented (Zimbardo, 2008, p. 4). In the Torah, Lucifer is expressed as the assistant of God, free to fulfil his desires independently and he is exempted from lots of things until he transforms a sort of viper's nest. Then, he is sacked and exiled from heaven. He becomes arrogant owing to his unique beauty and charm and he wastes his power by forgetting his wisdom. According to the Torah and Bible, he is imprisoned in fire and sent to the world since he refuses to obey human beings as they are weaker than him. In the end, God punishes him and his followers forever and ever (Lee, 1997, p. 220-221).



**Picture 1.**

An illustration about Lucifer.

Source: <https://siinabhi.artstation.com/projects/811Qen> - 15.10.2022.

Apart from Torah and Bible, some cultures define Lucifer as the devil itself and it is usually portrayed as a source of threat, fear and sin. Hence, he is indicated as if he was responsible for all malignancy, chaos, poverty and corruption in the universe. Despite some differences in terms of the illustrations of Lucifer, lots of pictures render him highly dreadful as can be seen in the pictures 1 and 2. In the first picture, there is a clear attribution to his power and difference from humanity while the second picture focuses on his connection to hell and fire.



**Picture 2.**

Lucifer in the hell.

Source: <https://www.wallpaperflare.com/lucifer-illustration-dark-angel-fire-flame-hell-warrior-wallpaper-qnznp> - 20.06.2022.

Many films, series or television programmes such as *The Devil's Advocate* (1997) by Taylor Hackford, *Constantin* (2005) by Francis Lawrence, *Grimm* (2011) and *Preacher* (2016) gain inspiration from Lucifer's myth on account of his rebellion against God and transformation from good to evil. Indeed, the deeds Lucifer fulfils function as a mirror for human beings and the stories taken from this myth have a higher rating. Paranormal powers and unknown forces always seem very attractive and mysterious to audiences. When this story is transformed into the digital world, where producers are often more free to reflect what they want, then Lucifer has turned out something different compared to the original story. Indeed, the series in the new digital platforms have dealt with him more positively, yet while perpetuating it, then they apply the same tactics which have been repeated for years: The derogation of women. I mean waiting for a huge transformation concerning woman roles in the framework of digital platforms may be a Pollyannaist point of view, yet digital platforms seem to have the potential to reflect reality as it should be. However, this has not happened according to *Lucifer*.

#### **The Analysis of Lucifer in terms of *Femme Fatale* within the context of Gender, Discrimination and Digital Media**

The Nexflix production *Lucifer* which is an adaptation of a comic named *The Sandman* has been one of the most influential and popular television series recently. It started in 2016 and lasted for 6 seasons and even it finished, it is still well-known and popular. The main character Lucifer Morningstar is the devil who is bored with his routine life in hell and comes to Los Angeles and works for the detectives to solve the mysterious events. However, as an mysterious character, he is the devil himself and he utilises his supernatural powers to figure out the problems which Chloe Decker, the beautiful but control freak detective, faces in every episode of the series. Almost all episodes own a different crime story, which is very common in Film Noir. Also, the camera angles, lighting, and contrast between white and black during the episodes are very easy to notice which makes us think that the director of the series has got inspiration from both *Film Noir* and *Neo-Noir*.



**Picture 3.**

*Lucifer* Series Netflix Poster.

Source: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4052886/> - 20.05.2022.

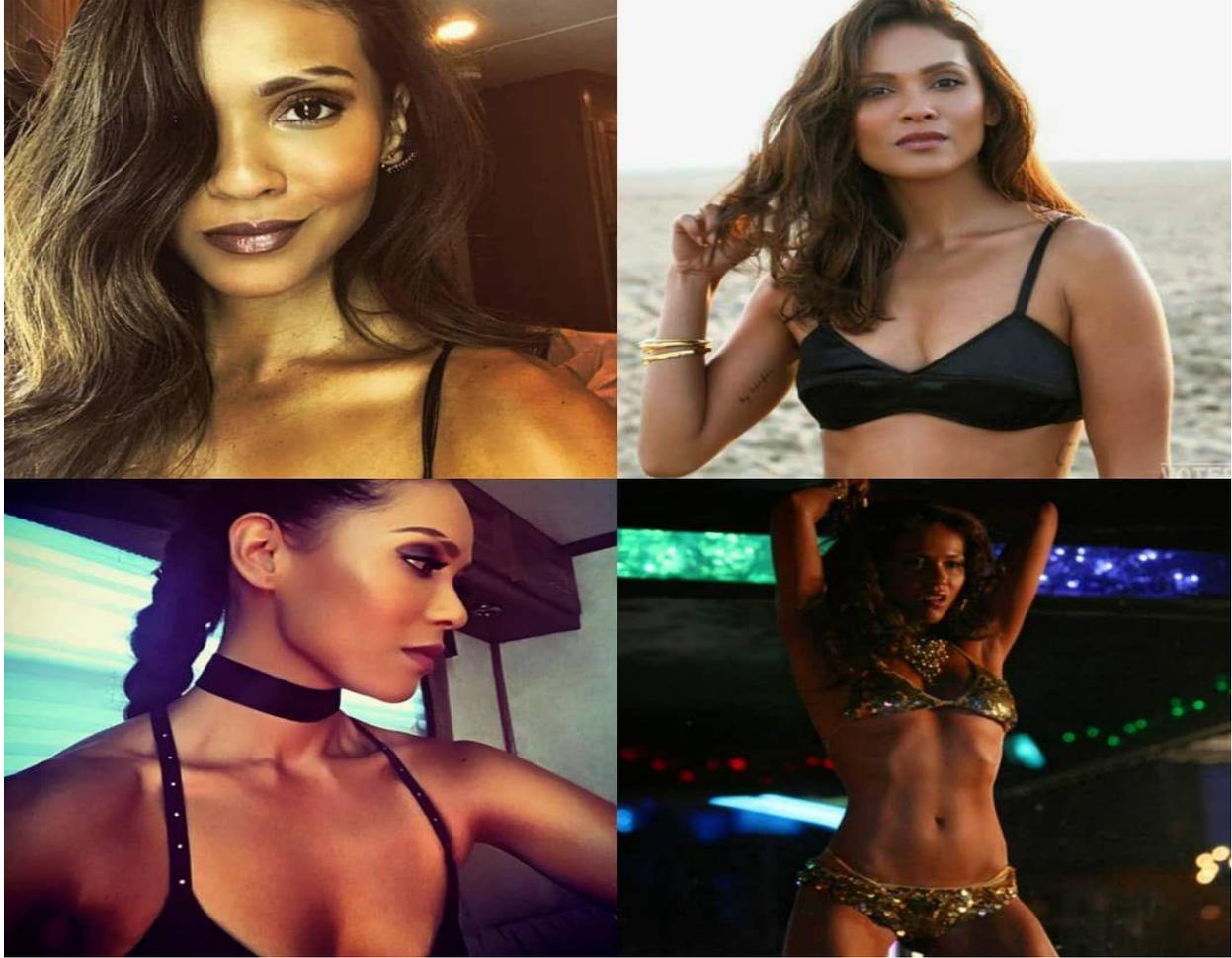
When it comes to *Film Noir* or *Neo-Noir*, the most substantial element is undeniably the *femme fatale* and the *Lucifer* series has lots of women characters having traits of *femme fatale*. Even though there is no woman character defined or illustrated as a *femme fatale* directly, almost all women characters show *femme fatale* features.

### **Womanhood constrained with sexuality in *Lucifer* in terms of *femme fatale***

Detective Chloe is an ordinary woman, a single mother and a dull character, yet after she meets Lucifer, she turns into a more sexy, charming and brave female. In lots of films, *femme fatales* are the women who have the potential to seduce men any time they want, but Chloe is the one who has been seduced by Lucifer.

Nevertheless, as time goes by and Lucifer falls in love with her, then Chloe is the person who sometimes betrays and tempts Lucifer. In other words, their roles have been replaced and Chloe has turned into a woman who can manipulate the devil, not to be manipulated. In the series,

however, although Lucifer is the symbol of sin and evil, he instantly becomes an innocent male character and detective Chloe is depicted as if she was a like an evil character. Actually, even the real devil is less derogatory than Chloe.



**Picture 4.**

Mazekeen as a *femme fatale*.

Source: <https://tr.pinterest.com/pin/64457838404390913/> - 20.08.2022.

Another important woman character worth mentioning is Maze or Mazekeen, a demon coming from hell and she is extremely attractive, sexy and tempting. She is good at fighting and she is Lucifer's executioner, server, guardian, assistant and ex-lover. Maze is depicted as a woman who can seduce any man she desires during the episodes, she has some emotional sides, though. When she behaves like an ordinary woman, she transforms into a vulnerable character. Hence, she constantly tries to seem strong. As a woman and demon, she has traits that are suitable for a *femme fatale*. On the other hand, she is a loyal, obedient and submissive woman, yet she also betrays Lucifer as Chloe does.

Besides Chloe and Maze, Lucifer's mother who is the goddess of the universe and God's wife inhabits a mortal lawyer known as Charlotte in the series and is the primary antagonist of season 2. Charlotte is a hot, sex-addicted, provocative mother figure and she behaves beyond the

rules. She not only entraps Lucifer but also misleads him again and again and as a man, Lucifer loses his trust in women. Apart from Charlotte, Lucifer's therapist Linda is a significant identity who needs to be highlighted as she is Lucifer's best friend. Linda is a mortal like Chloe and she is afraid of Lucifer at first as soon as she discovers Lucifer is the real devil, yet as time goes by, she trusts Lucifer. Nevertheless, even Linda misleads Lucifer several times during the episodes.

Almost all women characters around Lucifer are sexy, beautiful, and dangerous and have the potential to manipulate men simply thanks to their sex appeal and wit. Even if they often serve Lucifer, they mostly betray him. Indeed, the women characters are portrayed as a menace and the male identities in the series are associated with God, the devil, or angels created by God whereas women characters are not as powerful as men and they are either demons or mortals. Even Goddess, Charlotte has to obey the rules of God, his husband. Though it has a plot consisting of fiction and myths, the general structure of the series is shaped according to the norms of patriarchy. This indirectly has created a framework where masculine roots or notions have the possibility to be reproduced and sustained perpetually.

#### **Ineffective/discriminated womanhood in terms of *femme fatale***

Lucifer owns a patriarchal point of view and direct or indirect discrimination towards women may be observed in lots of different scenes during the first and second seasons. For example, almost all female characters mentioned here are either mothers or lovers. Even if Chloe is a detective, she mostly needs Lucifer's support to figure out murders. Namely, although Chloe is depicted as a policewoman, her pivotal feature is being a mum or having some sex appeal akin to a *femme fatale*. Similarly, Lucifer's mother, Charlotte is also illustrated with her sexuality, scary intelligence and lethiferous power which also define the basic traits *femme fatales* have. However, Charlotte shares the same destiny as most *femme fatales* do. In the past, most *femme fatales* in Film Noir films were punished or sentenced to death at the end of the films because of their non-standard manners in a male-dominant society. In the same way, Charlotte is dismissed from the world by Lucifer as he stigmatises her mum as a menace for his aims and potency.

Besides Chloe and Charlotte, Maze can be shown as an example of discriminated womanhood in the series. Maze is a beautiful, strong and minacious woman as *femme fatales*, but she is an assistant of Lucifer and she can not break Lucifer's word. Furthermore, her sole purpose is helping Lucifer and she does not have any right to live for her passion. When viewed from this angle, women characters are ineffective or they are effective as much as Lucifer lets them take action. Lots of *femme fatales* in classical *Film Noir* films seem to be powerful and crafty, yet they are not able to achieve their goals. *Femme fatale* is a character whom men ascribe some negative

meanings and this attribution can be seen in *Lucifer* clearly. It can be asserted that the roles defined for the woman characters in this series are closely related to the subconscious mind of masculinity and *Lucifer* is a sort of manifestation of unconscious fears of manhood. Due to this, portraying women in an ineffective way or indicating them with a segregated approach is to be taken normally.



**Picture 5.**

*Lucifer* Cast.

Source: <https://www.cinemablend.com/television/2561274/where-youve-seen-the-lucifer-cast-before>, 14.07.2022.

### **Lucifer as a symbol of the patriarchal structure**

*Lucifer* as a series has come into our lives as part of a newly established platform known as Netflix. This platform as a part of digital media includes some well-known series such as *Grace&Frankie*, *Period. End of Sentence*, *A secret Love* or *Orange is the New Black* which have the potential to point out gender roles realistically. On the other hand, *Lucifer* contains ironic, witty and enjoyable episodes, but most of the parts carry traces of patriarchy and it functions differently compared to other examples mentioned above. Much as it has been expected to alter the perspective with regard to womanhood due to the innovative power of digital media platforms, it unfortunately performs vice versa.

The language or the discourse *Lucifer* prefers while talking with with female characters produces or reinforces some stereotypes managed and maintained by a sort of invisible patriarchal system. To give an example, whenever he faces a woman in the series, he positions them as a sexual object or classifies them as a menace that is described as a demon with the aid of a discourse consisting of highly heteronormative codes. The slang or obscene words *Lucifer* utters are nearly

always relevant to women. Indeed, the correlation *Lucifer* forms related to women is mostly phallogentric.

Furthermore, jokes, attributions or other references mostly belong to heteronormative tendencies in the series. Lucifer is a womanizer and he functions like a sex machine which is illustrated as a normal attitude for a man, but once a woman character in the series is portrayed like this, she is occasionally described as a threat, source of fear or immoral. The attitudes ascribed to women in the series also induce the negative roles defined for women. Whenever Lucifer trusts someone, the series implicates that he has been played false by the women. Another male character who is dominant and a symbol of hetero-patriarchy in the series is Lucifer's brother, Amenadiel, who is the eldest of God's angels. He is portrayed strong, invincible and obedient to God. He is one of the lovers of Maze and he sees women as jeopardy in the series and strives to protect himself from them. As it is clear from this example, other male characters are also the symbol of power, potency and maintenance of virility in *Lucifer*.

Though masculinity has had toxic roots for ages, *Lucifer* creates a sort of misconception in terms of gender roles. That is, manhood is shown as a victim, not womanhood which fully distorts the facts about gender roles. *Lucifer* is a part of a new digital world in a new digital age, yet the way it dwells on woman identity is clearly traditional. Even the devil itself is afraid of women meaning that females are a threat or hazard to humankind. This depiction is very akin to the portrayal of *femme fatales* in *Film Noir* or *Neo-Noir*. Accordingly, *Lucifer* emulates the structure of *Film Noir* and the way it deals with femininity is very similar to the representation of *femme fatales* in *Film Noir* films. From my point of view, changing digital platforms still get inspiration from old perspectives constructed by hegemonic masculinity and combining old myths with new stances does not seem to shift anything related to gender even if there is a minor esperance with new media formations and open-minded approaches linked with female roles.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The digital media age has changed our lives remarkably and this transformation has been felt almost everywhere from our houses to offices. Our position in society, our roles appointed to us, and expectations from us all are altering gradually. In this regard, the media have a big role in this tremendous revolution as it occasionally determines our lifestyles. In terms of gender, however, digital media systems are not able to generate a grand difference given that they still follow old customs, rituals, and traditions despite changing ownership structures. When these platforms revolve against the standard patriarchal norms by focusing on LGBTI+ rights or some minorities or diasporas, this gives rise to social reactions, conflicts and naturally losing ratings in rating

competitions I mean though some digital platforms such as Netflix, MUBI or Amazon would like to reflect the gender roles in compliance with realistic representations, this may be reacted negatively as most societies are still managed by a patriarchal structure and as a result of this, these platforms have to abstain from these kinds of inclinations in terms of female, male or LGBTI+ roles.

The cinematic expression can be pointed out as one of the most profound ways for revolutionising the ideas, stereotypes or cliches in any society provided that it is managed by common sense believing the equality, free thought and of course human rights. On the other hand, cinema may be converted into a kind of ideological apparatus whose sole purpose is reinforcing its power or preserving its present sovereignty. When viewed from this aspect, media have the same potential to manipulate the accepted norms by creating their own agency or sustaining the conformist point of view embodied by power.

New media, which might be demonstrated as a turning point for a new communication age, may be expected to change the old routines or customs pertaining to mainstream media as they create a new platform for individuals who desire to stick up for their rights and they provide open public space. Also, new media platforms form innovative gender roles to indicate how a woman or man must be represented in media. In some ways, new media tools including social media and new television platforms have transformed how we communicate, receipt, commentate and emulate each other. Despite this effort and slight alteration, however, it is probable to observe that the transformation over gender stayed constrained. That is, gender roles, family bonds, or social relationships are still controlled by the hegemony and notions and beliefs that we have known for centuries remained stable in spite of some bending rules, habits or taboos.

Lucifer is an old story getting its roots from antique beliefs comprised of phallogocentric culture. *Lucifer* deals with women with demonic references and derogatory descriptions while it praises the established masculine attributions. Lucifer, the devil in the series has been portrayed with some angelic references and he is the one who has been betrayed by the women, particularly Chloe and his mother. Other women in the series also function like a *femme fatale*, who poses a risk for masculinity with her irresistible beauty and indispensable sex appeal. The way how Lucifer behaves or treats these women is generally disturbing. He classifies them as either a sex object or a risk. According to this point of view, womanhood is inferior, worse and more perilous than Lucifer, the source of all evil in the universe. As an evil character, Lucifer is coded with positive connotations. Women in *Lucifer*, mostly characterized by the impact of features of the *femme fatale*, are the ones who are represented to have the potential to create a main jeopardy.

All in all, lots of television series have been shaped according to the demands of power even if some avant-garde productions have the potential to break this inclination. In the light of the argument claimed here, *Lucifer* also produces, reproduces and maintains the traditional structures with regard to gender roles by repeating cliché images linked with femininity and masculinity. In other words, It functions like an androcentric management instrument which does its duty. In spite of the evolutions that occurred in the digital television systems, a lot of producers still use the iterant elements we have seen in the cinema sector for years and I strongly believe that *Lucifer* is the series which evokes *femme fatale* negatively and subordinate the roles of women.,

### Author's Note

This article was the improved and extended version of the paper presented at *Üsküdar University, 9th. International Communication Days, Communication Studies in the Digital Age Symposium* held on 16-18 May, 2022.

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### **Internet Resources**

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/femme%20fatale> (Access Date: 02.05.2022)