

Introduction

In his most famous work on politics, *The Prince*, Niccolò Machiavelli spoke of the “Mathematical Sense”, a strategy of war first made known by Phillip of Macedonia. Machiavelli called it: *divide et impera*, better known to us in English as “Divide and Conquer”.

The words have become hollow after centuries of use, and we have become somewhat detached from their deepest and most nuanced meaning. In the current political climate, we see it in the division of people into factions, and our efforts to maintain our ties within groups based on excising members who do not meet standards of purity of ideas or ideals.

While completing a masters thesis in depth psychology from Pacifica Graduate Institute, I uncovered, deep within the framework of fairy tales and children’s media, a set of feminine archetypes, that are the result of *divide et impera*, hidden in plain sight for thousands of years across the Western canon.

I didn’t expect to find them, and yet there they were staring out at me as I researched and wrote about the similarities between modern retellings of the fairy tales of *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Snow Queen*. I saw over and over again that if we look at almost any depiction of femaleness, whether it is in literature, religious texts, film, or television, we will see a girl around the age of eight years old (typically around the time boys and men will start to objectify her), being forced into one of two paths, she is either groomed for a safe, domestic life of service and childrearing, or she is banished to a life of magical isolation and power.

The girl is cut off from one side of herself, and she grows up separated from her counterpart self. If she accepts the role of the domestic life, she is welcomed into society, but is told to never expect power or self-sovereignty. If she accepts the role of power, she is told to never expect family or love, living a life of isolation and enchantment. In almost every place I looked I found the divided parts. I found her in Disney films from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* through *Frozen*. I found her in traditional films like *Gone with the Wind*, *Titanic*, *Thelma and Louise*; and in iconic television characters like, Daenerys Targaryen and Cersei Lannister from *Game of Thrones*, Sydney Bristow from *Alias*, Samantha and Serena from *Bewitched*, and many more. I found her on Broadway too, in plays from *Wicked* to *Waitress*.

The archetype is complex, but easy to recognize once you learn her attributes. When she is in her divided state, she is either a Maiden in Search of Relationship, (MISOR); or she is a magical creature, a witch of sorts: Magical, Isolated, Powerful, and Endangered, (MIPE). When she becomes reunited with her counterpart, she is Sovereign, Imperatrix, the one who has been reunited with herself. I call this character the United Queen, because she was rent asunder, and is now brought together again and made whole. In being reunited, she has a new set of qualities that make her unique in her self-sovereignty. She has experienced the division of her identity, and as such has a unique perspective on humanity.

In her human form, she is simply the “Divided Woman, who becomes the United Queen” in possession of her own sovereignty, and the person who is her own *imperator* in life, she is in command, no one has her under their rule. As such the *imperative* of her life is fully decided by her, and drives her forward without having to become secondary to any societal model of ownership or childlike dependence.

Discovering her and her multiple constituent parts has completely changed my life, in most ways making everything better. In some ways, discovering her has made me sad, as I take stock of the consequences of the Queen Divided, and thus ruled over. Mostly, though discovering her has healed my own divided self, reuniting the parts into my own Sovereign Imperatrix, my own Sovereign Queen. I bring these discoveries to you to help heal and share the power of the Queen. She seeks to reunify women (and men) who have suffered in the

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rendering. I invite you to the Sacred Table, the Red Tent, the Throne Room. The place where you will find Her. Where you find Her, you will find Your Self. You will find her in these pages, you will find her in your own heart, and in your own history. Through your journey to bind the rendered space, you will climb the steps to your own throne, and you will touch your hands to the Crown that is your feminine birthright, and become the Queen of your own Sovereign life.

What this book is about

There is a structure to the Queen's Path, it follows a formula that we can recognize easily, though it is fairly complex if you try to look at it all at once. Once you see it though, you will see it in every story, every woman's life who you know. It is the basic building block that most women internalize about their identity from a very young age. When I have spoken to individual women about this structure, most of them look at me with a horrified blank stare, and then burst into tears. Their suffering is real, and the structure that created it is real. In many respects, it is an impersonal level of destruction, because it is a cultural expectation that women will simply fall into these structures, and maintain the status quo.

The purpose of this work however, is to illuminate the structures themselves, and question whether or not we want to maintain and reproduce them. If we examine where the current canon of film and television have been taking these archetypes, we can argue that women archetypally are clearly challenging the inevitability of these structures. The role of women in film and television, in novels, are guides of where the culture is going, where women see our journeys headed into the next generation. They are future forward, not historical. By examining the changes in archetypes, we can illuminate the roles that the culture projects for women in the next chapter of influence.

Over the last several thousand years the archetypal stories have shown primarily the divided woman. As power has shifted in the last eighty years, the roles of women in the stories we tell ourselves have also changed. In the last twenty years, those roles have changed dramatically, with more women characters taking control of their own stories. These female characters own their domains unlike any time in recent history. Whether these are characters like Jenna from *Waitress*, Elphaba from *Wicked*, Elle from *Legally Blonde*, or Maleficent from the film of the same name. What separates modern female characters from the past is precisely the opportunity for self-sovereignty. The capacity of an individual woman character to own her own life, and the story she tells in the process is one of identifying and joining the two disparate, separated parts of herself back together into a unified, radical sovereign, a Queen.

How this book is Organized

The Path of the Queen has a cycle, and follows a set path. The cycle is laid out on a circle. The circle is organized into both halves and quadrants. The halves denote where the journey takes place, and quadrants illuminate the journey of the individual woman or character. The book starts at the beginning of the Queen's Path, outlining first the halves, and then there are four sections dedicated to each quadrant of the circle. Within each quadrant there is a description of the parts of the path that the Divided Woman travels on her journey to become a united queen (or not, as it is possible that she fail in this quest). Within each quadrant there is a chapter for each step of the journey along the path.

The next chapter will discuss where and how the Path of the Queen takes place. The two upper quadrants, and the two lower quadrants forming their own distinct locations. As the individual travels through them she reveals a clear direction and unique dangers.

Section One Begins with the First Quadrant, and the first step of the Journey, "Once Upon a Time". Hear Section will name a Quadrant. Within each section the reader will find the steps along the Queen's Path. Each Quadrant has it's own dangers, challenges, and opportunities.

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The final quadrant is one where most women have not had the opportunity to set their proverbial glass slippers. For most of us, we are taught to want “Happily Ever After” (HEA) and that if we do, we will enjoy a life that makes sense. But this fairy tale ending is actually just the successful conclusion of the rendering of the woman. If she ends her story with HEA then her life will be over. For most of us, we come alive when faced with this dark choice. Staring down HEA is the path to HEALING, and thus the possibility of reunification. Reunification is the road to the crown. Every woman deserves to complete her Queen’s Path, every woman deserves to be an embodied queen, celebrated as her sovereign self, with no one to rule over her.

Gratitude

I am a dedicated student of Steven Pressfield, and feel strongly that all art flows through artists, we are not the origin of creativity. I am lucky that this artistic expression chose me as a conduit to flow into the world. May it serve you in your liberation or creation process, whether that is a work of art, or the art of living.

May my contribution add to the great song of life.

To the muses I offer thanks and humility.

Stacey Simmons