

## THE TRAGEDY OF PRINCESS DIANA: A MYTHIC SELFOBJECT FOR EVERYWOMAN

Ok. Here's what I figured out about Princess Di.

It's all about the Cinderella Myth gone terribly wrong for Di and everywoman's previously un-grieved and un-relinquished hope that someday a handsome prince will come forth to save her from her mundane life with an very un-princely life mate. I think it goes like this: Di was seen to be living out a version of the standard three part drama repeated endlessly in movies, i.e, girl meets boy, girl loses boy, girl and boy get together again and live happily ever after. As a "mere" commoner, she married the prince of England. But, the prince turned out to be a philandering frog, so it was back to the ashes with her, denounced by the evil queen and hounded by the pesky paparazzi (envious, vengeful step sisters and brothers?). Things had gone wrong for Cinderella, as they do for many (most? all?) women who are Cinderella wantabe's. But, after trying so hard to be good and do well for all those victims of land mines (who are also castrated, if not killed, and thereby attesting to her desexualized purity of purpose), she has finally found a new prince and fallen in love again. The happy ending appeared within reach. Things were going to turn out with a happy ending after all because she had been soooo good and beautiful and kind. Then, *blam!* Everything went terribly, terribly wrong and both she and the new, *right* prince were suddenly *killed* and all hope for a happy ending, *ever*, were dashed. FOREVER.

I think women who were so affected by this tragedy that they brought flowers to the castle, then kneeled and wept as though their hearts were breaking, may have also been crying for the loss of their own Cinderella drama that they had been living vicariously through Di. BUT even more heart rending (I can feel it as I write this) is that they have lost this seemingly ideal woman with whom they could identify (an idealized identification selfobject, in psychoanalytic terms). By so doing, a good and pure part of themselves had been unconsciously vouched-safe to Di, and therefore could provide a nourishing, vicarious validation that was chronically missing in their own lives.

Without realizing it, this quiet, unacknowledged identification was protecting them from facing the SO very painful truth about what had gone terribly wrong with their own lives as constructed vis-a-vis the Cinderella script. The loss forces a confrontation of the silent, un-admitted and un-mourned giving up of ever being rescued by a prince, in any way. Giving up our strong intention to live a perfect life is profoundly painful and sad for everyone, male or female, no matter which particular classic myth must be given up.

Perhaps the men who were touched by this drama could unconsciously identify with what had been lived out so tragically, even though their personal myth was different. It seems to me that the fundamental origin and essence of the psychic pain was identical for both women and men, i.e., giving up all hope for the intended childhood goal of the perfect relationship that make everyone feel like a prince or princess all the time. It is awful to admit, once and for all, "it will never happen to me", a painful and wretched experience that everyone goes through in some manner in order to actualize the power inherent in one's own real life, un-fettered by the crippling constraints of a mythic ideal, sapping the strength derived from acknowledging one's actual, but limited (in some real way), potential.

Perhaps the ghastly reality for many of these mourning women is that large parts of their lives have been lived in silent accordance with this myth and thus they have foreclosed real, but not mythically ideal, opportunities that are lost forever by the ticking of their biological clocks.

They weep for the real tragedy of Diana's violent death, but also for the tragedy of their own.

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