

Literature review on keywords goddess female lover seductress mythology

[Art & Culture](#), [Symbolism](#)



Abstract

This essay deals with the female portrayal of a lover and a seductress, as conveyed in Manuela Dunn Mascetti's book *The Son of Eve: Mythology and Symbols of the Goddess*. Several examples are given, from real life as well as from the world of cinema, to fully explain the notion. The contrast between the lover and the seductress is also explained in light of its reference to the goddess Aphrodite and a venture to classify her has been undertaken as well.

Manuela Dunn Mascetti's book *The Son of Eve: Mythology and Symbols of the Goddess* denotes the position of women in society, through the employment of long-established, religious art, mythological symbolism and the feminine archetype of the Goddess. The stories and illustrations outline a repression and censorship of the feminine ideal. The notion of women being perceived as either lovers or seductresses, with the additional perception of them being symbols of motherhood, that is, the Mother Goddess, is an ancient one. Thus, the lover would be a woman who, ideally, is not concerned with earthly passions, but more with the thought of belonging to someone not physically, but spiritually, in the sense of the amalgamation of two souls. On the other hand, the seductress is physically adorned with beauty and she uses it to instigate sexual desire, willingly or unwillingly, in order to manipulate men. Consequently, out of fear for the power of women finally surfacing, the female persona has become disfigured under the male gaze and thus, the notions of the lover and the seductress, or any ideals that strikingly move away from the mother principle are considered almost

perverse.

As an essential example, I present one of my female acquaintances, who could definitely be considered a seductress. Like any beautiful woman, she is well aware of that fact and does not deter from emphasizing it whenever possible. Her make-up is ever-present and flawless, just like her clothes.

What seems to make her even more attractive is the fact that she possesses a very warm personality; she is always smiling and is a very social person.

This, in combination with her always impeccable appearance most definitely portrays her as a seductress; not in the mythological sense, naturally, but in the modern. She thrives on the mostly male attention that she receives and though she does not behave like a loose woman, she sometimes is portrayed as such due to her external appearance.

The patriarchal lens has always secretly generated an outright fear of sexually liberated and outspoken women, thus, deeming them seductresses, because as Mascetti says they “enchant existence into playing with them” and are “aware of [their] ambivalent nature, living a polar existence between the conscious character [they present] to others and the more erotic impulses and thoughts inherited from the non-human Goddess” (97).

The onscreen seductress my acquaintance reminds me of is the villainess from *Batman*, Poison Ivy. She applies the Goddess-given touch of Nature, thus inducing the magical power of the Goddess and finally, achieves magic.

She uses plant toxins and mind controlling pheromones in her pursuit of criminal activities, but persistently remains true to the origin of her powers: Mother Earth. Her every day self is a simple botanist, who carries within herself the witch element: her alter ego spins a web that entices and

manipulates men. In a way, given shelter and magic abilities from Mother Nature, Poison Ivy is the creator and the destroyer archetype in one female persona.

The goddess of love and beauty, Aphrodite, has always been a passionately used object in art. Her persona, lingering in the dense area between a lover and a seductress, is that of a disciplined thinker and the instigator of sexual desire. Though her role of a mother to the mischievous Eros may appear to make her closer to the lover woman, she in fact, is also a seductress. Artists immortalizing her have always envisioned her as fascinatingly erotic, and like other women who are in control of their baser instincts, she is suspected to possess fearful magic and power that needs to be diminished; because, she possesses " that divine sorcery [which] revolves around love-magic, in her wish to arouse love through power" (Mascetti, 94).

Women of seductive qualities are queens of magic who possess the knowledge of what power their feminine magic has over men. " This is an ever-present trait in every woman and it represents great threat to man" (Mascetti, 102). Men fear this power, and thus have been trying to repress it for centuries.

References:

Mascetti, M. D. (1990). *The Son of Eve: Mythology and Symbols of the Goddess*. Lady Lake, FL: Fireside Publications.