

# **Divine Madness: Archetypes of Romantic Love**

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### **The Unholy Marriage: Obsession's Soul**

Common sense and, I fear, the majority of psychotherapists would have us avoid the demon lover like sin. According to this view, we get ourselves involved in self-destructive patterns of behavior; and the only way to deal with them is to recognize them for what they are and exert our will-power to stop. Such a view underestimates the deeper strata of the psyche and the powerful unconscious "will" of the archetypes. These deep structural elements are stronger than the ego and, if not integrated, are sure to find some means of expressing themselves -- whether in boredom and depression, or in new self-destructive patterns. The common view also overlooks the divine spark in the demon lover. We are obsessed with him (or her) for a reason; he is challenging us with important psychological work, the kind of work James Hillman so felicitously calls "soul making." When I encounter someone who arouses a response of this magnitude, an obsession this insistent, I am being confronted with some essential part of my soul which hitherto has been inaccessible to me. To forget, close off, or suppress this tantalizing new dimension of my psyche is very difficult to accomplish. The cost of successful repression is to remain undeveloped, carrying around with me a certain deadness or flatness. I become a kind of Paul Morel unable to get on with life after his mother's death.

That we have a healthy need for the demon lover may be concluded from some of the initial symptoms of our fascination with him. Very frequently people seem to "come alive" on beginning an affair with an individual who later proves to be the focus of a powerful obsession. I have seen several cases in which a marriage seems to profit when one of the partners falls in love with a third person. The fact that immense difficulties lie in wait in the near future can hardly deny the signs of health that such an influx of new psychic energy occasions. It is a sure indication that the individual and/or the marriage has been only half alive. Flaubert describes Mme. Bovary quite flatteringly during the same period that she was sinking into her "sensual drunkenness":

Never had Mme. Bovary been so beautiful as at this period; she had that indefinable beauty that results from joy, from enthusiasm, from success, and that is only the harmony of temperament with circumstances. . . . Charles, as when they were first married, thought her delicious and quite irresistible (211).

Charles and Emma had married in a most unconscious manner, each expecting the other to do the work of keeping them joyful, enthusiastic, and successful; neither took any responsibility for the other or for himself. Without fundamental change in their attitudes, there is no alternative to Emma's having a chain of demon lovers. She repeats the beginning

of the affair over and over, rather like an alcoholic striving for the elusive moment of peaceful well-being.

In *The Lover*, Marguerite Duras gives us a much more specific image of what the demon lover provides. In this passage, the French teenager is aware of a major contribution she makes to her Chinese lover's psyche:

He hasn't the strength to love me in opposition to his father, to possess me, take me away. He often weeps because he can't find the strength to love beyond fear. His heroism is me, his cravenness is his father's money (49).

If she were demon enough to rouse him to stand up to his father and embrace life on a technician's salary, and if he actually did take her away, he would begin to be a hero. He would take possession of his own soul. I doubt they would have lived "happily ever after," but he would really have begun work on the part of his soul which has been flattened and deadened by his father's money. His masculine courage would give him a pride and a buoyancy. His pessimism would lessen. So far from doing him harm, the demon lover stirs him to the point where he sees what is required of him. The man's pathology lies in his spinelessness, not at all in his falling in love. Life has thrown her in his path to lure him into becoming himself.

I am inclined to believe that all cases of obsession over a demon lover admit of such a diagnosis. Unfortunately, however, not all cases of obsessive love allow themselves to be delineated so crisply as Duras' narrative. Sometimes one knows one is being made more whole by one's erotic partnership even though all seems hopeless from a purely external perspective. Dostoyevsky's *Insulted and Injured* describes just such a love affair. Vanya, the narrator, is in love with Natasha, who has fallen into a demonic obsession with Alyosha. Alyosha loves her dearly, after his inadequate fashion, but allows himself to be pressured by his father into marrying Katya (whom he also loves). Although he never positively says so, I have no doubt that Vanya feels he is benefiting in a "soul-making" fashion from his love affair with Natasha. He has accepted the naked sword separating them and makes little reference to his obsession. He stays as near to her as he can, participates in her life as fully as circumstances will allow, and serves her openheartedly, though not abjectly. Natasha is something of an hysterical female, tied by the conventions of nineteenth-century society in St. Petersburg, but she takes a very similar stance toward Alyosha as Vanya does toward her:

"Yes, I love him as though I were mad," she answered, turning pale as though in bodily pain. "I never loved you like that, Vanya. . . . I don't love him in the right way. . . . Why he's sworn to love me, made all sorts of promises; but I don't trust one of his promises . . . though I knew he wasn't lying to me, and can't lie. . . . I'm glad to be his slave . . .; to put up with anything from him, anything, so long as he is with me, so long as I can look at him! I think he might even love another woman if only I were there, if only I might be near. Isn't that abject, Vanya?" (1962: 38)

Vanya understands very well -- particularly after he has met Alyosha:

The look in his eyes, gentle and candid, penetrated to my heart.

. . . It is true that he had some unpleasant traits, some of the bad habits characteristic of aristocratic society: frivolity, self-complacency, and polite insolence. But he was so candid and simple at heart that he was the first to blame himself for these defeats . . . Even egoism in him was rather attractive, just perhaps because it was open and not concealed. There was nothing

reserved about him. He was weak, confiding, and faint-hearted; he had no will whatever. . . .Men like him are destined never to grow up (1962: 40).

Alyosha's pure, gentle, childlike soul is irresistible to both of them. One can very easily imagine such a severely neurotic individual bearing the divine spark in his soul. He thereby arouses in Natasha a kind of inspiration and joy which is reward enough for all her suffering. She is not bitter about or destroyed by Alyosha's marriage with Katya. Although she sacrificed her reputation for him, there is no doubt that the hectic, short-term relationship was worth it to her. Natasha herself does not think in these terms, but it is clear to the modern reader that the affair assisted her maturation process and changed her relationship with her parents -- particularly with her naive and childlike father.

The theme of the transformative potential of the demon lover occurs frequently in the novels of Dostoyevsky. My favorite is the relationship in *The Brothers Karamazov* between Dmitry Karamazov, a good-hearted but savagely impulsive soldier, and Grushenka Svetlov, a beautiful, peasant-featured, incest survivor, who has inherited money and tended it well. Both are full of self-hatred. Dmitry says he prefers women from the back streets, "There you find true adventures, . . . gold nuggets in the dirt" (124). In the frenzy of his demonic eros, he calls Grushenka a slut and says he loves and hates her at the same time (119). He has a genuine understanding of the demon lover, saying that beauty is a terrible and mysterious thing, where "God and the devil are fighting for mastery, and the battle field is the heart of man" (124).

As soon as I began visiting Grushenka, I ceased to be engaged to Katerina. I've ceased to be an honest man. I realize that alright. . . . At first I went to beat her. For I knew . . . that she was a pitiless, cunning she-devil. I went to beat hell out of her and I stayed there. . . . That she-devil Grushenka has a kind of curve of the body which can be detected on her foot. You can see it even in the little toe of her left foot. I saw it and kissed it, but that was all -- I swear! She says to me, "I'll marry you if you like, for you're a pauper. Promise not to beat me and to let me do what I like, and perhaps I'll marry you." She laughed. And she is laughing still!" . . .

And you really want to marry her?

If she wants me to, I shall marry her at once, if not, I shall stay with her just the same. I shall be the caretaker in her yard (136f).

These words, being filled with self-hate, emphasize the shadow side of Grushenka. On hearing them, Dmitry's younger brother, the novice monk Alyosha, concludes that Grushenka must be a wicked woman. He goes to her, therefore, immediately after the death of his spiritual master. He says he felt drawn to her because he was mean and wicked himself. But what he found was: "a true sister. I've found a treasure -- a loving soul" (413). Again Dostoevsky uses the device of an innocent narrator to give us a dependable perspective on things. Behind the notorious life, the cunning, and the curves is a pure soul, a divine spark.

Dmitry's impetuosity saves his soul.[1] Unlike Duras' wealthy milquetoast and unlike Paul Morel, he dares (albeit in a frenzy) to risk a lifetime of disgrace and agony for "one hour, one minute" with Grushenka (514). They meet, and each discovers to his surprise that the other is a bearer of a divine spark. They are gradually sobered, brought down to earth, transformed by what they have seen in the other's soul and in their own. The nature of the transformation may be surmised from the following description of Grushenka, two months

after their night of love and Dmitry's arrest for the murder of his father (ironically, a crime he did not commit):

She had greatly changed, had grown thin and sallow-faced, though now for nearly two weeks she had been well enough to go out. But, in Alyosha's view, her face seemed much more attractive than before and he looked to meet her eyes when he went into her room. There seemed to be a look of firmness and greater comprehension in her eyes. There were suggestions of some spiritual change in her, of a resolution that appeared to be humble and unalterable, good and irrevocable. . . . no trace of her former frivolity . . . had not lost her former youthful gaiety. . . . There was a soft light in her once proud eyes, and yet -- and yet they blazed with an ominous fire at times, too, when an old anxiety stole into her heart, an anxiety that had never abated, but had even grown stronger. . . Katerina (660).

Her blazing jealousy tells us that Dmitry is still a bit of a demon lover for her; but we can see how much of her wholeness she has reclaimed from behind the repressive force of her former self-hatred, frivolity, grandiosity, and cunning.

In Jungian language, the demon lover results from failure to differentiate our anima or animus from our shadow. The numinous, contrasexual other within me whose job it is to relate me to the Self (anima or animus) is contaminated with everything I wish I did not have to deal with (shadow). As a major component of the unconscious, the shadow encompasses a large quantity of psychic energy. When this is added to the energy already governed by the anima, the resulting figure can be extraordinarily powerful, fascinating, and fearsome. It is the reason the demon lover may appear so morally questionable, so immature, so bestial. Our obsessiveness on his account results from our indecisiveness. On the one horn of the dilemma, we cannot decide whether to modify, repudiate, or disengage from the values which have guided us to this point in our lives. These values have driven all contrary tendencies into the shadow. We are afraid if we act upon this contrariety, we will lose our bearings, be sent to hell, dishonor ourselves. On the other horn of the dilemma, if we hold onto the values of our past, we gain a certain security at the expense of a hollow feeling that we have betrayed ourselves by failing to meet a challenge.

Although this dilemma is apt to present itself as a momentous, once-and-for-all decision, the job of reclaiming shadow material from the unconscious proceeds in increments and requires many very ordinary decisions. A Japanese fairy tale expresses this reality through the image of transforming a shadowy, grotesque mermaid into a beautiful woman.

### **The Story of Howari**

Prince Howari, a hunter descended from the Goddess of the Sun and the God of the Mountain, is driven by his jealous older brother out of the mountains to the sea, where he meets a man clad in seaweed and shells. Offering Horawi divine protection, the stranger weaves him a boat of reeds and sets the prince afloat on the waves, whereupon he is taken through a whirlpool to an undersea world of great beauty. There he meets an entrancing young woman named Toyotama, the daughter of the God of the Sea. They marry and live a blissful existence. Toyotama and her father are the only members of the family who possess human form -- the others bearing the form of sea dragons.

Eventually Horawi feels homesick for the mountains and persuades the pregnant Toyotama to have her baby on land and to live with him there. Her agreement bears the condition that he must precede her to land and build her a hut on shore, thatched with cormorant feathers. She will

appear when the baby is due, but he is not to look on her again until the baby is born.

Back on land, Horawi confronts his brother with the help of two jewels given him by the God of the Sea. One makes the sea rise until the brother begs for mercy, and the other makes the sea resume its ordinary bounds. Horawi then proceeds to build the hut and wait what seems a long, long time for Toyotama to appear. One night he hears cries of labor and peeks out to see his wife lying on the sand of the shore. She gestures in horror for him to leave. At dawn he finds the new-born child and catches sight of a sea dragon's tail as it slithers into the surf (Time-Life (a): 87-95).

Horawi's inability to stand up to his aggressive shadow, portrayed by his brother, drives him to the kingdom opposite to that of his birth. This would mean he undergoes a depression which takes him into depths of the unconscious where he has never been before. There he meets a monstrous demon lover in the form of a sea dragon, but he is so conscious of the divine spark she bears that he sees her as a woman of unparalleled beauty. His urgency to return to land represents his need to integrate this new unconscious material with consciousness. There are three indications that he attains partial success. First, he comes back with sufficient force to stand up to his brother, indicating that a large quantity of psychic energy which had been locked away in the shadow is now available for his conscious use. Second, he finally sees the shadow side of his lover -- as important for him as it was for Elsa in Lohengrin and for Psyche in the story of Amor and Psyche. Third, although the monstrous part of the shadow has slithered back into the unconscious, he is left with a baby. This would represent the new-born, undeveloped potential which his new integration has made possible. There is no blissful "happy ever after" in this story. Horawi now has to raise and enjoy his child, and probably fall in love again.

Parallels to this theme of a transforming marriage with the demon lover can be found in several traditions. The following story comes from a Siberian Goldi shaman. His marriage to the demon lover has been his schooling and the source of his personal power:

Once I was asleep on my sick-bed, when a spirit approached me. It was a very beautiful woman. Her figure was very slight, she was no more than half an arshin (71 cm.) tall. Her face and attire were quite as those of our Gold women. . . .She said: "I am the 'ayami' of your ancestors the Shamans. I taught them shamaning. Now I am going to teach you. The old shamans have died off, and there is no one to heal people. You are to become a shaman."

She has been coming to me ever since, and I sleep with her as with my own wife, but we have no children. She lives quite by herself without any relatives in a hut, on a mountain, but she often changes her abode. Sometimes she comes under the aspect of an old woman, and sometimes under that of a wolf, so that she is terrible to look at. Sometimes she comes as a winged tiger. I mount it and she takes me to show me different countries. . .

Now my "ayami" does not come to me as frequently as before. Formerly, when teaching me, she used to come every night. She has given me three assistants -- [panther, bear, and tiger]. They come to me in my dreams, and appear whenever I summon them while shamaning. If one of them refuses to come, the "ayami" makes them obey, . . . When I am shamaning, the "ayami" and the assistant spirits are possessing me: whether big or small, they penetrate me as smoke or vapour would. When the "ayami" is within me, it is she who speaks through my mouth, and she does everything herself. . . . (Eliade, 1951/64: 72f).

Marriage with the demon lover has been a recurrent theme in Christianity. One thinks, perhaps, of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*, Sinclair Lewis' *Elmer Gantry*, and recent scandals involving television evangelists. But the tradition goes all the way back to the New

Testament (Acts 8:9-24), where a magician named Simon (Simon Magus) is described as traveling about with a certain Helena whom he claimed to have found in a brothel in Tyre and held up as the lowliest and most recent incarnation of the fallen female principle of the godhead. He believed himself a Christian, having been converted through the preaching of the apostle, Philip. The second century Christian apologist, Irenaeus, portrays Simon as a Gnostic and libertine dissident of true Christianity. Modern scholarship sees him as a representative of one of the multitude of competing religious trends in the late antique babel out of which Christianity eventually emerged as the spiritual standard-bearer of western culture. In Simon's mythological thinking, Thought broke away from her father, Silence, resulting in an alienation and deterioration of divine elements, which she dragged down from highest heaven into the material cosmos. The cosmos was filled with confusion and darkness, being governed by a large number of angels, each striving wickedly like jinn or hungry ghosts for mastery of the whole. Simon Magus believed he was re-establishing the order of both cosmos and pleroma (the heavenly "fullness" of divine light) by setting himself and Helena before his followers as incarnations of Silence and Thought, the dual object of enlightened belief.

There can be little doubt that what Simon found in the brothel was a woman on whom he could project both his anima and his shadow. She was, for him, a demon lover, and probably contributed immensely to the inflation by which he identified himself and Helena, jointly, as divine. Probably, too, Simon was able to recognize the divine spark in Helena. Two factors set him outside the commonplace in Christian tradition: he marries -- or at least pursues an on-going relationship with -- the demon lover; and he publicizes this. The Elmer Gantry's see their erotic pursuits as sins to be hidden, and remain blind to the divine spark which inspires their obsessions. The desert saints of early Christianity became famous for their victorious bouts with sexual temptation, thereby succeeding in repressing the shadow -- like Thomas Aquinas driving the harlot from his prison cell with a red hot poker.

Like Dmitry Karamazov and the Goldi shaman cited above, Simon Magus chose a bold and dangerous course. Its justification resides in the divine spark, the confidence that one has seen the other through the lens of the anima or animus -- a higher truth than that touted officially or understood by the masses. Although we know nothing of Simon's continuing career, it is evident that his path is not an easy one to follow. I have seen a number of dramatic failures.

A Catholic laborer in his late twenties, for example, although quite obsessive in his prudish ideas regarding sex, married a stripper who worked a three-city circuit and was therefore out of town more than half the time. When she was home, he was both proud and afraid of her. When she was away, he was tormented by thoughts of her unfaithfulness and the certainty of divine condemnation. Eventually the tension broke him. He fell into a psychosis and was committed to a state hospital, where he came to believe he was Michael the Archangel who drove the fallen angels out of heaven. He began preaching, writing letters and telephoning from the hospital everyone he could think of with a message of divine love and brimstone.

A born-again Christian, also in his late twenties, a driven and highly successful salesman, one day met a neighbor who earned her living as a nude go-go dancer. He courted her earnestly with an amorous message of Christian fundamentalism. Inwardly, he struggled

sincerely with his own moral principles, while outwardly he offended his co-religionists by his compromising presence in her apartment evenings and again early in the morning for breakfast. Finally, his firm was forced to demote him, having received a number of calls from clients complaining of the "bimbo" he brought with him on his business calls.

Clearly physical and affectionate nearness with the demon lover is not sufficient to constitute a transformative "marriage" with her or him. Something akin to the learning and redeeming experiences of Prince Horawi and the Goldi shaman is essential. Indian culture provides us some hints in this direction. Indeed, probably the first record of a Simon Magus-type figure is to be found in the *Atharva Veda* (ca. 900 BC), one of the four original sacred books of India. There appears a description of a "*vratyā*, a non-Vedic priest, who traveled from place to place in a cart with a woman whom he prostituted and a musician who performed for him at his rites." Later the term *vratyā* came to mean one who had fallen from the true practices of the Aryan religion; but the original *vratyas* may have constituted one of the sources of asceticism in Hinduism (Basham: 243). Dating from almost two millennia earlier than the *Atharva Veda*, is a small seal from the city of Mohenjo Daro which shows a kind of animal-headed Shiva figure, sitting cross-legged as if in meditation (Shiva being the Lord of Yoga), with an erect penis (Ibid. Plate IX,c). Then, around 1000 AD, one finds advocated by certain Tantrists "daily intercourse in out of the way places with twelve-year-old girls of the Candala [untouchable] caste" (Conze: 195). Eliade makes sense of this as follows:

Every naked woman incarnates *prakṛiti* . . . [the] limitless capacity to create. . . . If, in the presence of the naked woman, one does not find in one's inmost being the same terrifying emotion that one feels before the revelation of the cosmic mystery, there is no rite, there is only a secular act . . . (1954/69: 259).

Evidently he is trying to describe something very closely related to what I have called the Self, the divine spark, the unification and balance of psychic wholeness, or unity with the cosmos. The following may be taken as an indication of what he means by a "rite":

[In] the profound mystical movement known as Sahajiya, . . . sexual union is understood as a means of obtaining "supreme bliss" (*mahasukha*), and it must never end in seminal emission. *Maithuna* [ritual sexual union] makes its appearance as the consummation of a long and difficult apprenticeship. The neophyte must acquire perfect control of his senses, and, to this end, he must approach the "devout woman" (*navika*) by stages and transform her into a goddess through an interiorized iconographic dramaturgy. Thus, for the first four months, he should wait upon her like a servant, sleep in the same room with her, then at her feet. During the next four months, while continuing to wait on her as before, he sleeps in the same bed, on the left side. During a third four months, he will sleep on the right side, then they will sleep embracing, etc. (266).

What Eliade here calls the effort to "acquire perfect control of his senses" is a part of the larger work which I have described as the work of integrating and redeeming shadow material. The unholy marriage with the demon lover -- be she an urban American "bimbo," one of Dmitry's golden nuggets from the back streets of St. Petersburg, or an untouchable from Calcutta -- transforms us only when we begin to do the very difficult and humdrum work of acquainting ourselves with our own inner demonic.

If we have learned anything from this study of the demon lover, it is that his demonic element has at least as much to do with us as with him. If our shadow side were not so inexperienced and unacknowledged, we would not be so fascinated by the shadow we think

we see in him. The Tantrists know that; it is the reason they devote a full twelve months to ritually approaching the devout woman, the *nayika*. One could hardly wish for a more detailed description of the naked sword, the deliberately accepted separation between me and my beloved. It is meant to interrupt the automatic drop in consciousness experienced in profane (as opposed to sacred) sexuality. Instead of a union in which they lose themselves, the Tantrists are striving for a union in which they become themselves more fully. For this they need the sword of their ritual to place distance between themselves and their *nayika* so that they can acquaint themselves with their lust, their longing for the bliss of unconscious rocking, their ego-centeredness, and many more shadowy motivations. All these get in their way of coming to know the Self and their partner.

I do not know the end of the salesman's story. Perhaps the demotion shocked him into catching a glimpse of his demon lover's dragon-tail. In any event, it appears that his efforts to marry his demon were very sincerely connected with his fundamentalist faith. The theological and social pressures brought to bear on him through his religion actually resulted in his accepting the naked sword. He was visiting with her in the evenings and breakfasting with her in the mornings but spending the nights in his own apartment. If he stays with the challenge she offers him and soberly deals with the difficulties -- professional, social, theological, and psychological --, he will begin to acquaint himself with his shadow. Simultaneously, he will become acquainted with the real woman whom he has been seeing as his demon lover.

The naked sword *enables* transformation. It gives us the distance to see what has to be done. We still have to do the work ourselves -- or at least actively cooperate with an integrating process which seems to emerge from the level of Self. Very frequently, especially in the beginning of a relationship, the work consists above all in recognizing and acknowledging our shadow. An excellent example of a failure along these lines appears in Thomas Hardy's novel, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. It is several years after Tess's tragic deflowering. She has met a young, theologically rebellious, overly earnest, fresh-faced clergyman with the improbably appropriate name of Angel Clare. Her tragedy makes her much more conscious and capable of love than he:

Clare knew that she loved him -- every curve of her form showed that -- but he did not know at that time the full depth of her devotion, its single-mindedness, its meekness; what long suffering it guaranteed, what honesty, what endurance, what good faith (1964: 231).

He does not know these things in her because he has not become conscious of them in himself. He is inflated with his theological ideas of how things *should* be and has not taken a good look at himself. When, shortly after their wedding, Tess confesses her sin to him, he says, "The woman I've been loving is not you" (246). It could hardly be better said. He has been loving his fanciful image of what Tess "should" be rather than the woman she is. He has been covering her with the mask of his projection: "I thought . . . that by giving up all ambition to win a wife with social standing . . . I should secure rustic innocence as surely as I should secure pink cheeks" (255).

There is something he cannot bear to see in her. He wanted a girl with pink cheeks to match his own, and he succeeded better than he could have guessed. In fact she is still a good deal fresher cheeked than he, in that his "forty-eight hour dissipation" with a woman appears quite tawdry in comparison with her integrity. Not able to bear living with the tainted, real

Tess, he leaves for South America. He runs half way around the world to avoid acknowledging the shadow of ecclesiastically and socially unsanctified love. He will not be able to understand Tess' integrity until he acquaints himself with exactly what did happen during that "dissipation" and in the relationship which made it possible. He appears not to know how he felt about that woman, or even how he feels now as he stands facing this disappointing new Tess.

His leaving implies that he values the security of his old beliefs, his old self-image, above the dangerous, new, wider perspective she offers him. If he can leave with so little struggle, he could hardly have seen her divine spark -- at least not knowingly. He is apparently not able to see it because it is also the spark in the center of the shadow which he refuses to acknowledge. When we *can* see the divine spark, then the "asceticism" of the unholy marriage, the work of acquainting ourselves with our own shadow, becomes a good deal easier. The spark holds us. It is a light at the end of our tunnel. If Angel Clare cannot see it, there is less to wonder about his departure for South America.

The notion of a spark of divinity, reality, or truth being hidden within dark, evil, deceptive, or profane appearances is very wide-spread in the history of religions. The Hindu Upanishads, for example, have as their central theme the reality of transcendent, invisible *brahman* beneath worldly, material form. The goal of Hinduism is to come to realize that "Thou art that [*brahman*]" (*Tat tvam asi*). In Islamic mysticism even the words of the Quran are taken as outer form, concealing a deeper, esoteric truth. But the actual image of sparks of divine life being hidden in profane reality and awaiting the work of right-seeing human beings to set them free, is most clearly to be found in the Western gnostic[2] tradition which has given rise to important mystical movements within Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Some of the earliest and best-documented texts come from contemporaries of Simon Magus and their descendants. Their elaborate cosmologies envisioned a pure, formless Light (the ineffable godhead) emanating a series of divine manifestations, each less purely light and more formed than the last. Finally one, usually feminine, divine manifestation breaks away from the *pleroma* (heavenly "fullness" of divine light) and falls into the cosmos, where her light is tragically scattered and mixed with matter. After this tragedy, both God and the universe are unhappy until the divine light can be restored to a divine Oneness.

In the Jewish mystical tradition, Kabbalah, Rabbi Isaac Luria Ashkenazi of the town of Safed in Palestine (1534-1572) has developed one of the most influential mystical theologies based on the mythic image of hidden divine sparks. In his view, the divine light emanating from the Shekhinah (literally, the divine "in-dwelling"; the female principle within the godhead) had to be collected in bowls or vessels, lest it revert directly back to the divinity. Without "garbs" or vessels, the light could not be made manifest. Unfortunately, however, the vessels were not strong enough. When they broke, the divine light was scattered into every part of the material world. All this took place before the beginning of time. Two historical events, however, have repeated the scattering of the light: Adam's sin and the Diaspora (*galut*) of the Jews.

Whenever we fall into sin we cause a repetition of . . . the confusion of the holy with the unclean, the "fall" of Shekhinah and her exile. "Sparks of Shekhinah" are scattered in all worlds and "there is no sphere of existence including organic and inorganic nature, that is not full of holy sparks which are mixed up with the Kelipoth ["shells" which hide the sparks] and need to be separated from them and lifted up" (Scholem 1941: 280).

However regrettable this cosmic disaster may be, it is a blessing in disguise; for it means that the whole world and all of us in it are shot through with the divine fire. It also means that we human beings who are aware of this situation, who have real experiential knowledge (gnosis) of the sparks and shells have an obligation and a very lofty calling. We are called to become participants with God in carrying out the divine will of manifesting the Light. We can help effect the restoration of divine unity (*Tikkun*): "The restoration of the ideal order is also the secret purpose of existence. Salvation means actually nothing but restitution, reintegration of the original whole, or *Tikkun*" . . . (Scholem, 1941: 268). In practical terms this means that when food is grown, prepared, or eaten by Jews who are aware of the sparks hidden within the shells of the fields, the grain stalks, the flour, and the bread, the sparks are freed from these material objects and returned to their Source. The same may be said for any of the activities of everyday life. For the one who has gnosis for the real nature of the world, every act is a sacred contribution to the divine drama of *Tikkun*. "The Children of Israel 'lift up the sparks' not only from the places trodden by their feet in their Galut [diaspora], but also, by their deeds, from the cosmos itself" (Scholem 1971: 46).

Nearly two centuries after Luria, the mystical theology of the shells and sparks was popularized and personalized by Israel ben Eliezer, known as the Baal Shem Tov ("Master of the Good Name") and the Father of Hasidism (1700-1760). He was the first to speak of each individual living in a world of his own sparks, so that each action of his life is an opportunity to lift his sparks (Scholem 1971: 190). When a Hasid (pious one) is in communion with God (*devekut*), every act performed contributes to *tikkun*. Thus Rabbi Dov Baer, the Maggid of Mezritch, one of the Baal Shem's most important followers, says:

Even by eating and drinking in purity and holiness, it is possible to hasten the coming of redemption, because through the kavanot, the intentions of eating, it is possible to remove the precious from the worthless, thus emptying the "Other Side" of the holy sparks that have remained in it (Buber 1960: 208).

The words of the Baal Shem, himself, as recorded by Buber, have a much more rough, lively, and mythic ring to them:

It is known that each spark that dwells in a stone or plant or another creature . . . is in prison, cannot stretch out its hands and feet and cannot speak, but its head lies on its knees. And who with the good strength of his spirit is able to raise the holy spark from stone to plant, and from plant to animal, from animal to speaking being, he leads it into freedom, and no setting free of captives is greater than this. It is as when a king's son is rescued from captivity and brought to his father (Buber 1958: 187f).

Even sin is not without its divine spark and its implicit holiness, according to the Baal Shem:

In all that is in the world dwell holy sparks, no thing is empty of them. In the actions of men also, indeed even in the sins that a man does, dwell holy sparks of the glory of God. And what is it that the sparks await that dwell in the sins? It is the turning. In the hour where you turn on account of sin, you raise to the higher world the sparks that were in it (Ibid., 189).

At the beginning of Dostoyevsky's novel, Dmitry Karamazov and Grushenka are seeing much more of the shells of one another than of the sparks. Even assuming some dim awareness of the sparks, they are too taken with one other in a profane manner. Dmitry is taken with Grushenka's physical beauty, her curves, her imperious air, her girlish

impetuosity, and mocking laughter. Grushenka is awakened by Dmitry's reckless gallantry, given a pleasant sense of hope by his optimism, and charmed by his rugged, emotional honesty. To all external appearances, they are both quite formidable and challenging individuals. No mistake there. But, within their souls, at the very center of their beings, crouch their sparks -- heads upon their knees. This expression from the Baal Shem catches exactly the gloomy depression and self-loathing in the pit of Dostoyevsky's protagonists.

Their hectic, embattled *Liebesnacht* (the "night of love" in *Tristan und Isolde*) changes this. Their captive sparks have been set free. In that new sense of depth and sobriety, seriousness of purpose and humble patience in their commitment to one another, the sparks in their souls have been "raised" at least a full life-stage (as from stone to plant or animal to speaking being). There is no doubt a long way they still have to go. They have by no means overcome their self-loathing, as the following words of Grushenka make clear:

"If we are to love one another, then let's love properly! I shall be your slave now, your slave for the rest of my life. It is sweet to be a slave! Kiss me! Beat me, torture me, do what you want with me. . . . Oh, I deserve to be tortured. . . .Stop! Wait, later, I don't want to now," she pushed him away suddenly. "Go away, Mitya, I'll go and have some wine now. I want to get drunk, I'm going to get drunk and dance. Yes I will! (1958: 516).

Subsequent events prove that Grushenka's submission, here, is genuine -- even to the point of faithfulness to a Dmitry falsely convicted of parricide. Without relinquishing her sense of shame and unworthiness, she drops her obsession over reconciling herself with the social order (becoming an honorable woman in the eyes of the town). She finds, as we can judge by the spiritual transformation Alyosha sees in her two months later, an inner faithfulness to a spark of truth in Dmitry's soul. Shortly after his arrest, when Dmitry vows to her that he is not guilty of his father's murder, she blesses herself before an icon on the wall and turns to the examining magistrate and tells him, "He'll never deceive anyone. He'll always tell the truth, you can believe it" (594). There can be no doubt that this comes from her heart. It is a picture of Grushenka's soul intermediate between the *Liebesnacht* and Alyosha's view two months later.

Thus what Dostoyevsky shows us of Grushenka is a pair of quite disparate views and a complicated transition between them. The "outer" view of a cunning, money-hungry, loose woman is not wholly false; but it is the "shell" which hides her spark. When Dmitry is enthralled by her outward appearance, she is thoroughly a demon lover for him. He is seeing primarily his projection onto her, as a mask which hides the deeper significance and even holiness of her personhood. At this point he does not yet know that it is the spark which holds him. All he knows is that the shell or mask has a kind of fascinating glow about it. We readers only know the deeper reality through Alyosha's eyes which are accustomed to look deeper than the shell. What happens in the *Liebesnacht* is that Dmitry and Grushenka see through to the sparks for the first time. At this point their projections are no longer acting as masks but as lenses. Having seen through to the reality of the Self, they are able to commit themselves seriously to one another for the first time; and each is able to be more tolerant with himself. Having caught a glimpse of the Self within, they can begin to let go of their desperation and get on with their lives in a much more confident manner.

It is clear from these considerations that the Hasidic metaphor of freeing the sparks from their shells and the psychological metaphor of relinquishing projection's mask in favor

of its lens are very closely related. The parallel goes further. The kabbalists say that the freed sparks return to the divine oneness, while we have said that to make use of projection's lens is to see the soul or Self-level of the psyche. This means to relinquish the fragmentary and peripheral for what is whole and central. It means to come to know the divine spark within the beloved as well as in ourselves. Furthermore, to overcome the "demonism" of the demon lover means (in Tillich's language) to relinquish the "idolatry" of taking the symbol for the thing symbolized. All of this may be summarized in the language of the first chapter of this book: it means to find the depth, source, center, and end of romantic love -- the love of God.

The lives of the mystics provide us with many examples of an unholy marriage with a demon lover which becomes transformed by the saint's faithfulness to the sparks concealed within the shells. I think of such major figures in the Catholic tradition as St. Ignatius of Loyola and St. Teresa of Avila.

Ignatius (1491-1556) began his career as a soldier, fighting according to the romantic knightly ideal for the honor of a lady:

He imagined what he would do in the service of a certain lady, the means he would take so he could go to the country where she lived, the verses, the words he would say to her, the deeds of arms he would do in her service. He became so conceited with this that he did not consider how impossible it would be because the lady was not of the lower nobility nor a countess nor a duchess, but her station was higher than any of these. (Ignatius: 23).

While recovering from a battle wound -- his leg shattered by a cannonball --, Ignatius had nothing to read but a bible and a *Lives of the Saints*. In seeking escape from his boredom and pain in these improbable volumes, therefore, Ignatius deepened his romantic love and discovered the divine spark which animated it. It introduced him to a new campaign of spiritual discovery which led to his founding the Society of Jesus, the Jesuit Order of priests and lay brothers, under a banner reading, "For the Greater Glory of God and the Honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary." In the language of the Hasidim, we might say that the love of that earthly woman was but a shell concealing a spark of divine love, so that through his faithfulness to a single woman he discovered the One.

The story of Teresa of Avila (1515-1582), as told by Victoria Lincoln, is not so different. The great reformer, with John of the Cross, of the Carmelite Order of nuns and monks began her religious career in great spiritual ignorance -- though hardly more ignorant than the great majority of her colleagues. She was very attractive to men, both laymen and monks, for her great physical beauty and sparkling intelligence. At twenty-three she began to teach herself to pray, using de Osuna's *Spiritual Alphabet*. But it was not until the age of forty that she renounced a "lovemaking [with her confessors] that was both passionate and technically chaste" and which left her "torn between guilt and desire" (37). The agent of the change was her discovery of St. Augustine's *Confessions*, just recently translated into Spanish. It introduced her to a love of God which transcended and deepened the love she had already known with men in holy orders.

On the basis of Teresa's sincerity and my own experience with romantic love between celibate members of religious orders and their partners, I believe that those lesser loves which Teresa eventually repudiated were also highly spiritual. I have no doubt that they derived their fascination for her in no small part from the divine sparks which dwelt within

them and which she, with her spiritual gifts, was able to see quite clearly. Insofar as they promised the transcendental love she was searching for, they were demonic. For, as long as she clung to the individual men who enclosed the divine sparks like shells, she was unable to find the source, depth, end, and center for which she was searching. However, through simultaneously pursuing both her relationships with her confessors and her quest to find and understand the love of God, she succeeded in freeing the divine spark from her demonic lovers. No less than this is the goal of the unholy marriage.

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1. But it also results in his conviction on charges of parricide and his sentence to Siberia, whither he will probably be followed by Grushenka.
2. The words *Gnostic* and *Gnosticism* are derived from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning experiential, mystical knowledge. Christians have traditionally understood Gnosticism to be a heresy against which the second-century church struggled. Broader historical studies, however, have demonstrated that well-developed Gnostic tendencies were already flourishing before the birth of Christ, and in Jewish and pagan circles as well as Christian communities.