

Pandora's Box.....Again

A Psychological Discussion of the Relationship
Between Captain James T. Kirk and Commander Spock

By DIANE MARCHANT

I doubt there is need to rehash Spock as the basic quantity unknown... for we all have our pet theories on that one. Yet this 'child' of diversity has quite a bit of growing yet to do. He is tottering on the threshold.

Hero-worship plays a great role in the life of most adolescents. So why scoff, doubt or otherwise recoil in horror when faced with evidence that, at this stage, there may have been only one love in his life? And that that was a certain stocky, obligingly natured (if not a wee bit sex-crazy) starship captain named James T. Kirk.

This hybrid of the warring natures has lived in inner turmoil most, if not all, his life; fear and guilt gnawing away at him. Always afraid lest he do something considered un-Vulcan, something which would shame his father. He needed his father's respect and approval, yet the fear of losing them had been instrumental in driving him into leaving both Vulcan and father.

Aboard a basically Terran-manned Federation starship, Spock is surrounded by emotional beings so he can take a certain pride in being Vulcan. Yet he is lonely. Showing feeling, especially love, is a Vulcan social faux pas; so the emotional approaches of Earth women terrify him. It would appear he has never truly comprehended the relationship between his parents. He 'knew' his mother suffered living in a world where even a smile was a social sloccism and any love was 'bad taste'.

Thus, knowing Earthwomen suffer when denied love, he would (at this stage) never wish to inflict such suffering on anyone; for he feels he knows his own limitations in that field only too well. He can love, but does not believe he can show it. He has been among Terrans long enough to know that most Terran females demand some kind of demonstration. As he sees it, an Earthwoman would ask more than he could give, and he would feel guilty.

A Vulcan woman was out of the question, too; he was Terran enough to know that. So, where to from there? He had to love someone, he was human enough for that; although his Vulcan side would not permit the vernimology: love! What to call it then? Simple! Call it "Vulcan loyalty" to a superior officer.

Hidden behind that self-deception, Spock can happily love Kirk all he wants and not feel that it is un-Vulcan. In fact, seen through Vulcan eyes, it is highly laudable. A logical solution, because Kirk requires no demonstration of love. Spock does not have to feel he is failing Kirk by not providing one.

All this establishes only that he could love Kirk; but does he? Firstly, Kirk looms very large in Spock's life, they are rarely apart. Spock puts Kirk before everyone else. He even endangers the entire ship (in spite of Dr. McCoy's arguments) to rescue Kirk in 'The Tholian Web'. He is utterly indifferent to everyone's safety, including his own.

for all he could think of was saving Kirk. The ship and everything else faded into insignificance.

Another time, he hurls himself in front of the poison plant and takes the thorns full in the chest sooner than let his captain take them. (The Apple) In 'Amok Time', the thought that he had killed Kirk puts all thought of T'Pol out of his mind. Shock at what he has done even subjugates the instinctual Vulcan sex drive. He is only too quick to unload T'Pol and rush back to face the music for what he has done. Remember his words to T'Pol? When she says "Live Long and Prosper.", his response is "I shall do neither; I have killed my Captain and my friend.". This tends to indicate that not only will he not prosper but that he will not live long! I doubt if the Federation would demand the death penalty for his crime. So the obvious interpretation is that Spock will simply die of grief. (Spock gave no such indication when parted from Leila or Zarabeth, although admittedly, the circumstances were different.) Remember how he humbled himself to beg T'Pol to forbid Kirk's fighting. T'Pol's astonishment showed that what he was doing was quite unprecedented. The love of Kirk overcame everything. Can one forget Spock's face and his reaction as he cried "Jim!" upon seeing Kirk alive?

Now we come to 'And the Children Shall Lead...'; the turbo-lift scene was the closest that we ever came to seeing Spock do a spontaneous love scene. He was able to transfer so much simply by holding his captain and calling him by name; he gave Kirk back confidence in his own ability and belief in himself. Next to this, Spock's absurd cavortings with Leila are childish, his session with Zarabeth purely physical. In the turbo-lift, we hear for the first time the voice of ineffable love. Yet this is not the only time Spock speaks to or looks at Kirk with tenderness, incidents are quite numerous. Even in 'The Ultimate Computer' he makes a quiet declaration of his need for a human captain to follow.

Another time, as he watches Kirk sorrowing after losing Peena in 'Requiem for Methusala', McCoy berates him for not knowing the meaning of love. Then he abruptly quits, leaving them together. Spock predictably makes nonsense of McCoy's words by going over to the sleeping Kirk and laying his hand gently on the captain's head while telling him to forget.

Remember the agony in Spock's eyes when the aging Kirk stormed at him and accused him of conspiracy, in 'The Deadly Years'? And the even greater agony when he had to declare Kirk unfit for command?

Again, it was Kirk, indirectly, who won Spock back from Leila in 'This Side of Paradise'. In 'Naked Time', when Spock was infected, he thought of two people-- his mother, who had been so unhappy (why should he have cried for her if he had not thought she was?), and Jim Kirk, for whom he said he was ashamed of feeling friendship. Or, did he really mean 'friendship'? There was more in that statement than was at first apparent.

Making Spock almost stomp in Kirk's face in 'Plato's Stepchildren' was the most terrible thing the Platonians could have done-- did they know the truth? Spock felt hatred for, as he put it, "They almost made me kill you; they have stirred in me such hatred for them, such great hatred.". His own humiliation was insignificant, what counted was what they had nearly made him do to his captain. He felt loathing tinged with jealousy that Parnon had made Kirk grovel at his feet and recite that verse. Spock was in a destructive mood.

Now, to balance the scale, what have we to offer? 'This Side of Paradise' when Spock was admitted to be under the influence of a kind of drug. In 'All Our Yesterdays' he was emotionally transferred back in time to another and more savage era. In 'The Cloud Menders' he appeared to be rather attracted to Droxine, but did nothing about it.

During 'The Enterprise Incident', he showed a certain fondness for the company of a Romulan woman, but how much of this was policy? His few encounters with Chapel showed promise for the future, but for the present, perhaps, he wished her somewhere out beyond the galaxy.

Does Kirk know how Spock feels? Surely he does; he accepts it without comment, not being the man to shirk his responsibility - whether to ship, or a hybrid's peace of mind. He is also, of course, fond of Spock. Spock is closer to him even than McCoy. He admits that in 'Turnabout Intruder'.

None of this means, of course, that Spock is incapable of a purely physical relationship with a woman; but at present he is not emotionally mature enough to become totally involved. Both Leila and Zarabeth were merely physical interludes.

He is already committed, heart and soul, elsewhere and never could love any woman --- for he is not used to doing things by halves. The majority of people may still remain unconvinced, refusing to see that at this stage of his emotional development, Spock is not and could not be, any woman's man.

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