

Individuation:

How We Become Who We Are

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Dedication: To all local heroines and heroes who lived great lives that we we will never hear about. Also to my grandchildren, Galilee and Blaise, whom I got to watch and think about as I was writing this.

The individual has always had to struggle to keep from being overwhelmed by the tribe. If you try it, you will be lonely often, and sometimes frightened. But no price is too high to pay for the privilege of owning yourself.

Friedrich Nietzsche

To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Always remember that you are absolutely unique. Just like everyone else.

Margaret Mead

If individuality meant just the fact of personal uniqueness, there would be little to say about it except what is usually said – that we should have the courage to be ourselves, and heroically resist the world's efforts to reshape us into standardized components of the social machinery while trying to be nice to others. But individuality is rather more interesting and complicated than that once we accept, as I have argued in previous writing:

- that human groups possess existence and cognition of their own, *prior* in some respects to the minds of the individuals that comprise it;
- that a child is 'always already' a member of some community before he or she becomes significantly individual; and
- that biological Man is an ultrasocial animal, evolved and specialized for group living – not only remarkably helpless, but effectively sub-human outside of a specific cultural tradition and context that may attract either his loyalty or his resistance – or, ambivalently, both at once.

From this *constructivist* perspective,¹ individuality becomes not just a liberal value to be affirmed, achieved and maintained, but a biological riddle, and an existential (and political) dilemma between the group as a whole and its individual members. We are moved to wonder why evolution permitted us as much individuality as it did, and how our unique individuality develops, from the generic humanity of a newborn, over the trajectory of a life.

What needs to be explained about human individuality is both why it is as rich as it is, but at the same time, as limited as it is. We will come to that question at the end of this writing when we review the ground that has been covered. What we must see first is that the concept of *role* does not come near to covering what people draw from the groups and societies to which they belong and of which they are part. The metaphor of the actor on his social stage is as limited and ultimately threadbare as the neo-liberal myth of the heroically self-interested individual, discussed and rejected in my previous essay, *Group Mind and Mindset*.² What we draw from society is not well seen as a script and stage directions, but a whole approach to life – a skill set, an outlook or worldview, a self-creation project, an existential *style*. What I propose in this essay is to discuss our more-or-less problematic heritage from society as a counterpoint of eight themes that may be regarded as universals of human life.

I intend to argue that individuality is by no means a given, but the uncertain outcome of a long, complex process. It is true that a *potential* for individuality is given when sperm meets egg: Even a zygote already has a rudimentary uniqueness, or near-uniqueness, in its genetic makeup. By the time the infant is born, it has its own physiology and temperament, certainly a full-fledged humanity. But it has little more than that. Except in the Municipal Records Office, and in the minds of its (hopefully loving) parents, it has no kind of personal mindset or identity as yet. It will be months before it gains the full use of its own body, and a couple of years before it starts to talk.

Over these first, critical years, an interpersonal and cultural individuality develops. Within a year or so, give or take, the toddler is *starting to be* a somewhat autonomous individual, with everything to learn still about the navigation of social space. Before that the infant's individuality, such as it is, is largely in the minds of its hopefully loving parents and family. It has a penchant for sociality but no real identity as yet. It lies where it is placed. It suckles the breast when it is given. It cries for succor when it is distressed. I don't at all mean to minimize the keen attention and rapid bonding of a human infant, nor the vast learning that occurs in those first few months. But I do insist that a child's identity (and

1 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constructivism_learning_theory

2 See *Group Mind and Mindset*., Richard Ostrofsky (2012); available on line at ??

finally an adult's) is a socially achieved construct, not a gift of God nor a decree of fate. The new baby gradually acquires identity partly by its own efforts, partly as a reflection of the traits attributed to it by significant others. In this writing I hope to say something interesting on how identity is built.

By age four or five, the child is clearly a little person, with a great deal of social know-how, and the rudiments of a social identity. With puberty, themes of identity, integration and worldview come to the fore. Already present nascently in childhood, they become central preoccupations for the adult. Only in old age does individuality strike us as fully formed; and even then there may be room for change and growth.

The fact is that human children are already members of society – usually of a family, a neighborhood, of one or more language groups and ethnicities – well before they acquire much individuality to speak of. Yet we are not fully reliable role-players in society, still less mere puppets. Certainly we are shaped by our natural and social environments, but there is a cultural 'Baldwin Effect' also:³ To some extent, we make a personal selection of our environments and of the social values (selection criteria) to which we must then adapt. We remain “in ourselves and for ourselves” (*en soi et pour soi*) as the existentialists liked to say. We act in our own interests and as we see fit, but always within the horizons of a given milieu and collective mindset. The central problem of social science is to see this reciprocal influence steadily and accurately – of individuals on their society and of society on its individuals. It is easy to lose sight of one of these directions of influence or the other; it's not at all easy to hold them both in mind at the same time.

Group Mind and Mindset gave primacy to the group, seeking to explain why it makes sense to think of human groups as collective minds, capable of a sort of 'dialogue' with the individual minds that comprise them. In this paper, I am trying to clarify how individuality is formed and why it remains intellectually and ethically important, though not quite the absolute value that classical liberals⁴ tend to make it.

We humans can be highly individuated animals, but we are ultrasocial ones at the same time; and the human condition presents us constantly with a dilemma between these poles. "If I am not for myself, who will be for me?" Rabbi Hillel asked. "If I am for myself only, what am I?" In a single neat phrase, Kant noted Man's "unsocial sociability" as the crucial fact about human nature. Gurdjieff put it this way: "Only he will deserve the name of Man . . . who can preserve intact both the wolf and the sheep entrusted to his care." Many others have made this point one way or another: For most people, it's a complete truism that they must live with

3 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baldwin_effect

4 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_liberalism

others, and even *for* some others (or for something), while looking out for #1 as they do so. But, *pace* Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, Robert Nozick, Ayn Rand and other libertarian writers, social participation is no mere convention but a biological necessity. A naked human, deprived of some community and socially furnished artifacts, is a remarkably helpless animal. At the same time, *pace* the great communitarian thinkers like Aristotle, Confucius, Hegel and Karl Marx, in the last reckoning "we live alone and we die alone."⁵ Hillel, it seems to me, framed the human dilemma most clearly, and got it exactly right.

What follows is that each of us faces the problem of taking care of and being good to himself, as a precondition for taking care and being good to anyone else. Somehow, we have to straddle this dilemma and contain it, though most of us lean more toward one side or the other. The plain fact is that the horizons of any human individual are bounded by the society and specific groups of which he is a member, and that his plans and actions are inevitably constrained by those memberships. We are constantly bumping up against boundaries and constraints, no matter how society is organized. As between libertarians and their communitarian adversaries, there is plenty to argue and fight about – and the political arguments and fights along these lines have been plentiful and bloody. But there can be no right answer and no permanent resolution of the tension between the two positions – only a chronic balancing act between the individualist 'wolf,' and the herded, social 'sheep' in each of us. I think a full and honest recognition of this dilemma is the best we can do, and that we need to understand ourselves as outcomes to-date of the history of our management of this dilemma over the time that we have lived.

0. Eight Themes of Individuation

By no means a given, then, we understand individuality rather as the outcome of a long, complex process that Carl Jung called *individuation*. Further, we take it that an adequate theory of this process must account not just for the 'normal' individualities and identities of an Everyman or Everywoman but for the extraordinary identities of an Emily Dickinson and a Vincent van Gogh, a Marie Curie and an Isaac Newton, a Joan of Arc and a Mahatma Gandhi, an Elizabeth Báthory and a Ted Bundy, an Adolf Hitler and a Joseph Stalin. For all such people, our ordinary concepts of self-interest and rational agency break down. They lack the prudent self-centredness and balance from which our 'normal' identities seem to stem. For good or evil, they have their characteristic versions of 'creative craziness,' and are remembered in history for what they do with it: where that inner drive or compulsion takes them.

5 Attributed to Orson Welles.

An adequate theory of individuation must explain the etiology of ordinary neuroses (as Freud called them), common-or-garden personality traits, proclivities and eccentricities, and the various types of full-blown insanity that seem to occur when people are living as best they can with brains of abnormal wiring or chemistry. And it must cope with genius in all its forms: the extraordinary confluence (when it occurs) of individual proclivity and talent with a social and cultural milieu that needs and nurtures such an individual. In general terms, at least, it must give some grip on the thrust and trajectory of each human life. Though biographical details remain beyond its scope – as outcomes of chance and innumerable Butterfly Effects,⁶ at least it should understand the range of outcomes that are possible.

A full understanding of individuation and identity is beyond our reach, but I think we can make a start by treating individuation in thematic terms, as an interplay of conceptually distinct motifs, each with a logic of its own. The present essay is a sketch along those lines.

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We tend to think of the individuation process developmentally, as a sequence of phases or stages; but a thematic approach will be suggested here. Rather than a sequences of stages, it may be more fruitful to view individuation as a contrapuntal interplay of themes or motifs, each present from the beginning (or nearly so), but varying in prominence over a life's trajectory. In fact, we can distinguish at least eight such themes – which seem to be features of human experience itself, of its logic, so to speak – to be discussed here one by one after this introduction.

- Chapter 1 (on the theme of *Context*) is a very brief introduction to the beginnings of the individuation process, as a given instance of human evolution takes up its biological, cultural and social inheritance and transforms itself from a fertilized egg cell into a particular human infant, then into an adult, and at last into an ancestor – the residue of a single life and mind in its social world.
- Chapter 2 (on *Attachment*) explores the human creature's anchoring in the world, beginning just after birth and continuing through life – of course, with numerous changes along the way. We are needy creatures, who cannot survive without adequate connection to sources of air and water and food, and who cannot really thrive as individuals without 'stimulation': a cognitively nourishing supply of life's more abstract goods. Attachment is a second crucial theme of the individuation process, as people learn to satisfy their needs and desires, and to manages their sources of

6 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butterfly_effect

satisfaction in a variety of different ways.

- Chapter 3 (on *Adaptation*) is a glance at how we learn to function in the physical world, and as acceptable and accepted participants in a social milieu: how we “go along to get along” to win life's rewards and avoid its punishments, as nature and society mete them out.
- Chapter 4 looks at *Love* as 'mystics' like Rumi have understood it: a basis for all our interests and values, and thus a director and coordinator of our faculties of attention and relationship.
- Chapter 5 considers *Play/Expression* as a single theme of free imagination and 'acting-out'. This theme posits a close link of children's play to the art, religion, philosophy and science of adults. It treats all such activities as modes of 'time-binding' (in Alfred Korzybski's phrase),⁷ a cognitive expansion of the human animal's immediate present into a remembered past, an anticipated future and a purely notional, counter-factual world.
- Chapter 6 (on *Sociation*) returns to the problem of 'fitting-in' but considers how we choose or drift into, then specialize and settle down to particular games and situations to 'make a life.' Sociation is a theme of self-definition, self-projection and role-taking. Its achievement is the mental structure that we call *identity* or *persona* – a face to meet the faces that you meet. Where *Adaptation* provides a palette of competences, a range of situations with which we've learned to cope, *Sociation* is the use we make of that palette to compose a life-style and a life.
- Chapter 7 (on *Integration*) is a theme of recovery, re-inclusion and expression of those aspects of Self that came to be denied, perhaps repressed, as a price for sociation. To hold a job, start a family, present a coherent identity to others and to ourselves, we suppress aspects of ourselves that do not fit readily with the public person that we present to others. Collectively, these features are what Jung called the '*Shadow*' – figuratively, a shadow of our public identity that we keep hidden – even from ourselves, much of the time – but that clamor continually for acknowledgment, acceptance and expression. Where the theme of *Sociation* involves a project of role-taking and social identity, that of *Integration* poses the corresponding project of wholeness.
- Chapter 8 (on *Worldview*) is about the theme of finding and sustaining a cognitively adequate and meaningful context for one's

7 On 'acting-out' see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acting_out. On 'time binding,' see <http://www.xenodochy.org/gs/timebind.html>

existence. Worldview is what we bring to the world and to ourselves in order to make sense of them. Acquiring and adjusting one's worldview is a lifelong project. Art, religion, philosophy and science are public fruits of this project, but even the humblest individuals have some version of it. It is closely linked with the theme of Play/Expression (of Chapter 5) but with much greater anchoring in the constraints of reality and the demands of daily life.

For each individual these themes play differently – and this, of course, is how individuality is created. The themes interplay and intertwine. They often overlap and are probably not exhaustive. There may well be areas of human life that they cannot readily cover, though none came to mind as I was writing this. Yet these themes seem worth distinguishing because each has a logic and an integrity of its own, giving rise to characteristic necessities, values and motives as we will see.

Each theme can be seen as a distinct domain of preoccupation – a dimension of mindset; and in this abstract sense, its name will be written with a capital letter. For any given individual, each theme or preoccupation gives rise to a personal system of relationships and characteristic behaviors; and for these, a small letter will be used. Thus, for example, while we'll speak of Attachment in the abstract, for the motif of needs and wants, we'll speak of the attachment system – or simply the attachments – of some individual, for the means through which desires are satisfied. Attachment is one of the themes of anybody's life; the attachment system is an individual's nourishing connection to her environment: in the womb, an umbilical cord; in infancy and childhood a bond with caregivers; some kind of work in adulthood; some kind of 'pension' (literal or figurative) in old age.

Just how the themes play out for a given person will depend on his or her natural and social environment, and on the stage of life-cycle. Each theme will pose characteristic problems, to be solved somehow with typical choices to be made. Each will have its crises and its tipping points, when old solutions no longer work and old arrangements are replaced by new ones. Each will have its characteristic pathologies, when the choices or arrangements prove defective in some way: causing pain, or restricting further growth.

Each of these themes makes its contribution to the thrust and shaping of a human life, to the trajectory that we discern in retrospect, and in the lives of others. What I mean by 'thrust' is the dynamic and directionality of a life – the sense we have of its pushing forward in time, first as maturation and growth, but ultimately toward death, with whatever passions and accomplishments along the way. 'Shaping' is the individuation process itself: the influences that make one person different from another. What strikes me is that in the interplay of the themes, we

can discern a kind of existential Baldwin Effect:⁸ By the large and small choices we make, we select the very selection criteria for future learning and development.

Let me digress to spell this out. The Baldwin effect is a curious phenomenon that makes the evolutionary process of random mutation and natural selection not quite so random as it looks at first. Baldwin's idea was that the criteria of natural selection would themselves be subject to natural selection. In effect, a breeding population would choose the criteria that cull its offspring by its use of whatever plasticity it already possesses – by the life-choices that it makes. For example, the offspring of a browsing animal that is already munching on the leaves on trees would be selected for their ability to reach the juicier, more tender leaves higher up. Continued over many generations, they might evolve into the long-necked giraffe. Pastoral humans with access to the milk of goats or sheep or cattle would be (and were) selected for their ability to digest lactose as adults. The general idea is that the physiological and behavioral plasticity of any creature allows it a certain choice of lifestyle – in which may either fail or succeed to leave offspring who will be that much more likely to make the same choice, and in turn be more successful at it. Over many generations, the trait or behavior that was at first just possible is taken up into the gene pool and regularly manifested in the phenotype of a separate species.

A similar process is at work in the lifetime's learning of each individual. Not all human learning works through the reinforcement, positive or negative, of behavior that is at first merely trial-and-error; but a good part of our learning works this way. And, obviously, the behaviors relevant to a given lifestyle will be reinforced and shaped much more strongly if one regularly attempts a given lifestyle than if one does not. For example, city-slicker that I am, it happens that I do know the first thing about riding a horse. I was sent to camp as a kid; my partner's daughters liked to ride, and we visited dude ranches several times. From those experiences I do know one end of a horse from the other; I know how to mount and dismount; I know to post in the saddle in rhythm with the animal's movement; and so forth. But I would know much more about horseback riding (assuming I had no very serious accidents) if I had grown up around horses from childhood. As with the Baldwin effect in evolution, the experiences, happy and not, that shape my learning are just those to which I subject myself in the life-choices I make.

The value of the present approach stands or falls on the ability of these themes to evoke worthwhile consideration and study. In fact, all of them are already familiar and have been studied extensively. Only my treatment of Play/Expression, Sociation and Integration may seem a bit eccentric as I deploy these concepts in a somewhat broader sense than usual.

Finally, this approach takes seriously the idea that Man is modular – an

8 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baldwin_effect

inner committee, evolved not for coherence but for survival: making whatever leaps of *incoherence* when appropriate and relevant to an immediate situation. I am thinking of people as multi-dimensional beings who are understood most clearly not by supposedly 'essential traits' but by their handling, at each stage of their lives, of certain issues that all of us face. I see people as defined by the circumstances into which they were born, their means of livelihood, their accommodation to the demands of others, by who and what they love, by how they express themselves, and by their favorite modes of play. I see them as defined by the roles and projects that they've taken on, by their attempts to complete and 'round' themselves outside the demands or necessities of their social roles, and by their understanding of the world they live in and of their own relation to that world.

I do not assert that these are the only themes we can find, or that are worth discussing. Clearly, the themes of a human life can be enumerated and named in various ways, of which my list here is only one. Readers are invited to improve upon it in any way that serves their purpose. My point here is simply that a thematic approach to human development and individuation offers a view of life complementary to the approach of phases or stages, as taken by Eric Ericson or Gail Sheehy, for example. Their 'phased' approach emphasizes the crises and transitions of a life – which is fine, so long as one remembers that they occur differently and at different times in different people, and that they may work differently from one society and culture to another. By contrast, this thematic approach emphasizes the continuities of a life, and some issues that different cultures handle differently, but that are perennial for our species.

In *Group Minds and Mindset* I argued that humans evolved to be (and actually are) ultrasocial animals who belong to nested groups of various kinds, well before they develop much individuality to speak of. In the present paper, I seek to clarify how individuality is formed and why it remains important. I see a tension or dialectic between society and the individual as central to the human condition – one that will not go away, though we fudge and compromise with it as best we can. In fact, I see the positions of extreme libertarians and of fascists as two poles of a single confusion about the human condition that readily merge or alternate with one another in the political chaos we see today. One point I want to make is that group participation is a pre-condition for significant individuality. "One chimpanzee is not a chimpanzee at all," Robert Yerkes famously said; and it is still more true that an isolated human is scarcely human.⁹

In fact, these themes of individuation involve us with groups and make us dependent upon them in a number of ways:

- Context puts us into familial, linguistic and cultural groups before we acquire much individuality to speak of;

9 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feral_child

- Attachment renders us dependent on groups for nurture in the first years of life, and ever after for sustenance and conviviality;
- Adaptation, by definition, centers around the demands that groups make on us in exchange for the nurture and sustenance they provide;
- Playful and expressive behaviors are addressed to, and in response to, the expressions of fellow group-members and outsiders; Group memberships of various kinds are among the main features that we seek to express; We play at group roles to learn them before we take them on;
- Love binds us into relationships and constitutes many groups in doing so; from ancient times it has been used to bind distinct groups into alliances; as in the story of Romeo and Juliet it may cut across group boundaries with tragic consequences;
- Sociation is about the assumption and fulfillment of identity within specific groups (of family, workplace, etc.) and about the deprivations accepted for the sake of such identities;
- Integration is about the hedging, sublimation or transcendence such deprivations;
- Worldview, a key aspect of individuation, is nonetheless taken over from one's groups, and always remains in dialectic with them.

It is worth emphasizing here that the same activity or pursuit may be involved with and express two or more themes at the same time. As the themes develop and alter in their expression, we become who we are.

Case Study: Elizabeth Tudor

Needing a case study for my description of these eight themes, and with all world history to choose from, I settled finally on Elizabeth Tudor of England. For several reasons: First, she lived a long and full life, well documented and widely studied and interpreted. There is plenty of information about her under each of the themes I consider, and she superbly illustrates every one of them. Second, I was already familiar with her story from the BBC series *Elizabeth R* of 1971. Third, Elizabeth is still a timely figure, in some respects. Not just a great monarch, she became strikingly individuated in a world where this was difficult for women. Though born in 1533 (the year that Francisco Pizarro murdered the Inca Emperor Atahualpa, and that Ivan the Terrible succeeded to the throne of Muscovy) she was in many ways a modern woman. Other women before her had put their careers or missions ahead of marriage and children. But it is hard to think of any previous one who held her own so convincingly, and thrived so magnificently in a man's world.

There is no space here to tell her story fully, and I do not attempt to do

so; I merely outline some of her story to illustrate the themes I am describing. For real biography, I refer the reader to the sources mentioned in the footnote below,¹⁰ most conveniently to the first website mentioned.

Here then is a thematic approach that may help us to understand how human animals, evolved for participation in collective minds on increasingly large scales, can yet become as highly individuated as we know each other to be. Its central point is that we are conceived and born only with a *potential* for individuality, while individuality itself is a lifetime's achievement – and only a partial one at that.

1. Context: The Background to Existence

We emerge as individuals from a specific family milieu with social, geographic, historical and biological dimensions. These four are a pre-given context for individuation, strongly influencing what we will become before we are born. Most immediate is the social level: our cultures, institutions, families and circumstances. That society, of course, evolved and sustains itself in a specific region on the earth's surface, in a specific climate and natural environment, with resources that support its life. The society was not formed all at once, but has a definite history, mythically remembered, which continues to shape its members' consciousness. More broadly still, there is the biological context of life on Earth that shaped the human species and 'human nature' long before a man's sperm cell meets a woman's ovum – before the individual is conceived.

From one perspective, our discussion of context merely repeats the point made in *Group Minds and Mindsets*, that a human creature is 'always already' a member of some human society and group before he or she becomes significantly individual. But it can be read the way round, as suggesting how much the context leaves open: what the individuation process has to do on its own, through personal initiative and choice. Not even identical twins, turn out with identical personalities and interests.¹¹ Rather, they usually make a point of developing and emphasizing differences, precisely to form distinct identities. As we'll see, life not only invites but actually compels children from even the most similar backgrounds to individuate differently.¹² For that reason, the influences discussed here should *not* be understood as causes of personality. Rather,

10 For detailed information about Queen Elizabeth's life and times, the reader will need to look elsewhere. For the discussion here, I have relied on the biographies by Paul Johnson and J.E. Neale, and on the summary of her life at <http://englishhistory.net/tudor/monarchs/eliz1.html>. I would recommend the BBC series *Elizabeth R*, with Glenda Jackson in the title role, both for its vivid portrayal of her life and epoch and for its historical fidelity.

11 See <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2012/01/twins/miller-text>

12 Especially in connection with *niche* in Section 7 on sociation.

they set a 'stage,' (in Shakespeare's metaphor), on which men and women improvise their parts, and create themselves in doing so.

Although these four levels of context – the biological, the geographic, the historic and the social must always be kept in mind, there is little need or space here for general discussion of them. Volumes and libraries have been written about the history and culture and society of Elizabethan England; what can be offered here is just a mention of some events and issues that directly shaped Elizabeth's life (1533 - 1603), mostly in and near to the city of London.¹³

Elizabeth Tudor

Elizabeth was an Englishwoman – "mere English" as she liked to say, and as her countrymen in that time of rising nationalism seem to have liked to hear. The geography and history of her "half an island" were crucial in making her who she was.

The land whose throne she inherited was the fertile, desirable, readily accessible, southern portion of an island, only a few miles off the western coast of Europe. Trading, raiding and smuggling were easy and lucrative; but for a few thousand years before Elizabeth's time, it had been easier to think about mounting an invasion of England from the continent, or vice versa, than to actually pull it off. However, the Romans in ancient times, William the Conqueror in 1066 and Elizabeth's own grandfather Henry in 1485 had tried and succeeded. For about two hundred years before her time, between 1337 and 1513, a series of English kings had tried to invade the other way and failed. Most recently, Elizabeth's own father, Henry VIII had driven his kingdom close to bankruptcy, partly by sheer extravagance, partly by building ships (and so becoming one of the architects of British naval power), and partly by his attempts to hold a beachhead (especially the port of Calais) in western France.

A key issue in Elizabeth's life and reign was the fact of political, religious and ethnic diversity in the islands of which England was (and remains) only one part. There was no such thing as 'Great Britain' yet. The Welsh people were only conquered in 1282, and not finally annexed to England until 1542 – at which time Elizabeth was already 11 years old. Scotland was a separate entity, an ally of France and a potential enemy. Ireland had been conquered, more or less, but Irish lords were fighting bitterly for their independence, with some degree of assistance from Spain. Both countries and their peoples were major headaches of Elizabeth's foreign policy. England itself was only recently and precariously united. The so-called 'War of the Roses,' between the rival houses of York (in

13 But see the BBC series A History of Britain by Simon Schama, for a good introduction and overview. It is discussed at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_History_of_Britain_\(TV_series\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_History_of_Britain_(TV_series)) and available complete on You Tube at http://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=EA1842A3A1561065

northern England) and Lancaster (in the south) had been ended, only a hundred years before Elizabeth's accession, by her grandfather, Henry VII, who defeated and killed the Yorkist king, Richard III, and married Richard's niece, Elizabeth of York, who became Elizabeth Tudor's grandmother.

Elizabeth's father was Henry VIII, famous for his six wives and his break with the Church of Rome. Elizabeth herself, though illegitimate after Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn was declared null and void, was still third in line for the throne at the time of her father's death – after her older half-sister Mary (by Henry's first wife, Catherine of Aragon) and her younger half-brother Edward (by Jane Seymore, Henry's third wife).

One central feature of her reign was the three-way religious struggle between Catholics, Puritans and Anglicans bequeathed to her by her father who had defied the pope and put aside his first wife (of 24 years), the Spanish Catherine of Aragon for her failure to bear him a son – a male heir to the throne.

A second feature was the relative weakness of England at that time vis-a-vis Spain and France: two great, covetous and Catholic powers. Phillip II of Spain had been married to Elizabeth's older sister Mary – 'Bloody Mary,' notorious for her failed attempt to restore Catholicism to England and for her persecution of Protestants. As Mary was dying, Phillip had hoped to keep England within his grasp by marrying Elizabeth who had quite different ideas. France, the other great power of the time was allied with Scotland through Mary Stuart, who was only the surviving child of James V of Scotland and the French dauphin's wife. Catholic Ireland was and remained a potential ally of Spain. England's military and diplomatic situation, then, was precarious to say the least.

Though Elizabeth was an absolute monarch in theory, there was already an important Parliament that expected to be consulted, and a tradition of common law that had to be respected – in appearances, at least. Elizabeth's father had made extensive use of judicial murder, but the practice was repugnant in Elizabeth's time and to Elizabeth herself.

Women were second-class people in Elizabeth's time, in England no less than elsewhere. For a woman to reign autonomously, not as her husband's consort, was both awkward and scandalous. When Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558 at the age of 25 everyone expected her to marry and give her nation a king. That she chose not to do so, and made a success of her 'virginity,' has fascinated people in her time and since.

Finally, the biological context of Elizabeth's existence is not without some relevance to her story. Roughly two million years ago, some close relatives (if not direct ancestors) of modern humans began to migrate out of Africa, and quickly colonized the whole Eurasian landmass, including the British Isles eventually. They adapted to the range of climates and ecologies that they encountered with a great variety of specialized

technologies and lifestyles. As a female human, Elizabeth Tudor had as much stake in this legacy, and was as much shaped by it as everybody else. If extraterrestrial biologists had landed in England anytime between the late fall of 1588 and the winter of 1603 and said, "Take us to your leader," they could have proceeded to study or collect her as a fairly typical specimen.

At conception, a fertilized human egg cell is already heir to the whole biological history of its kind. Unless it's an identical twin, it already has a unique genome. Nine months later, it is born to a particular mother, in a particular geographic, historical and social situation. This much individuality it already has. This much Elizabeth Tudor had on her first appearance in the world. But she had scarcely any chance – even less than most of us get – to thrive and develop on her own terms as a generic human life. Even before she was born, her father's royal identity was a central component of her own.

So far as we can tell from descriptions, and from the portraits of her, she was fairly tall, with reddish brown hair, not strikingly beautiful, but handsome enough. We must try to disentangle her native temperament and interests from the normal accomplishments of a Renaissance princess. As a child, she seems to have been both studious and playful, with a lively mind and a ready wit. She enjoyed a variety of entertainments – notably literature, music, bear baiting, court masques, dancing, hunting and riding. She loved to read, and learned to write with distinction. By the time she was 11, she spoke six languages fluently.

To her contemporaries, Elizabeth's sex and reproductive capabilities were of the greatest importance. That she was female was a bitter disappointment to her father, Henry VIII, who had been hoping for a male heir. Long before she was queen and well into middle age, many eligible males – foreign princes and English noblemen – hoped to marry her for reasons of state, or as a route to power. Her people, fearing political chaos in the realm, hoped and expected that she would marry, to provide them with a male ruler and then with heirs to the throne. For many years, her counselors advised and urged her to do so, and argued only about who the lucky husband should be.

Elizabeth herself was quite aware of these hopes, and played with them adroitly for political and diplomatic advantage. For reasons of state, and more personal ones, she never married and never had children of her own, but sublimated her womanly inclinations remarkably, using the prospect of her marriage as diplomatic bait, while cultivating a public image of herself as the "the Virgin Queen," the mystical Mother of her People. In all likelihood, she actually remained a virgin (as pregnancy would have been a disaster for her), but she did have several boyfriends (not just male friends) over the course of her lifetime – notably Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who had an apartment next to hers at court and



Elizabeth Tudor - 13 years old

performed many functions of a consort. Their relationship started even before her coronation in 1558 and endured (with some ups and downs) for 30 years. It clearly was an amorous relationship. How far their petting went, we have no way to know.

Nor does it greatly matter. Possibly disenchanted by her father's appalling matrimonial career, Elizabeth's interest in marriage and children was relatively weak. She reigned alone for 45 years, and passed the throne to James VI of Scotland, thereby leading to a merger of these kingdoms which were and remain culturally different.

* * * * *

These five are fixed for every man before he leaves the womb:
His length of days, his fate, his wealth, his learning and his tomb.

The Panchatantra, attributed to Vishnu Sharma¹⁴

It was long believed (and some superstitious people still believe) that an individual's destiny could be read in the configuration of the heavens – the relative positions of the stars and planets – at the place and time of that person's birth. From this chapter on Context, we can see why this belief

14 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panchatantra> . For the stories, see <http://panchatantra.org/index.html> or <http://oaks.nvg.org/ptfirst.html>

had a certain plausibility, and why it still attracts interest. For we can see how much of Elizabeth's life – at, least the bare outline of its possibilities – was given her from birth. To stress just the two most obvious features: Had she not been born into a royal family, she would not have received the excellent education that she did, and could not have become queen. Had she been a boy, the whole subsequent history of her father's reign and of her own youth and accession would have been completely different. As heir apparent, she would have succeeded her father directly. There would have been no attempt at Catholic restoration under her older sister Mary. The religious issue in her reign would have taken a different form, as would the issue of her marriage. Both would have been much less delicate. Less ingenuity and prevarication would have been needed. Her early life and character would have been shaped quite differently than actually occurred. Luck certainly played a large part in her story. But her own character and intelligence, partly given in her genes, invited much of that luck.

So, without falling for any superstitious notion of 'destiny' or 'fate' we can speak of a kind of 'vector,' a general direction or grouping of possibilities prepared for the individual before he or she is born. Some individuals, Elizabeth for one, seem to follow that vector for a lifetime, becoming increasingly aware of its terms as they mature. They become more highly individuated as they live their lives, but always remain faithful to some original direction, and within its limits. Others rebel or get derailed along the way. They are not necessarily more courageous, or more fool-hardy than the more constant ones, though that may be the case. As we'll see below, accidents, burn-outs, rebellions, conversion experiences and so forth, are always possible. After the fact, these are certainly irrevocable, and it may be comforting to believe they could not have happened otherwise. Yet context, though powerfully binding, does not amount to 'fate.' The life-vector can shift – whether gradually, or quite abruptly sometimes. Its power is limited by other themes that we'll be discussing.

2. Attachment: The Needy Self

After existence itself, the first theme of a human life must be *Attachment*, our connection to the world, our drawing upon the resources and goods and gratifications it affords. This theme starts up just after conception when a newly fertilized egg attaches to the wall of a uterus; it ends only with the last breath a person takes. At the barest physical level, we must have food and water and air just to survive. But to thrive we also need attention, and stimulation and love. From clinical observation and common sense, we know that problematic attachment systems will compound with temperament, sometimes in unpredictable ways, to shape

the individual's mood and functioning both in childhood and later life.

The concept of attachment – in particular, of *troubled* attachment – is due to the psychiatrist and psychoanalyst John Bowlby who observed the syndrome in homeless and orphaned children after the Second World War; and it has been closely studied since.¹⁵ Psychologists now can theorize what every parent sees: that infants become attached to their familiar caregivers in a whole range of ways, deriving not just care and nourishment, but stimulation, loving attention and a secure base for experiment and exploration – ultimately, for a secure sense of *self*. In effect, the attachment patterns that develop once the infant is born represent a continuation and abstraction of the uterine placenta through which the developing foetus draws its nutrients and oxygen from its mother's bloodstream. As a theme of human existence, Attachment is most conspicuous in the first few years of life, during which an attachment *style* develops that will persist lifelong: With caregivers who respond appropriately, promptly and consistently to the infant's needs, a *secure attachment pattern* develops; there is a basic confidence, continually demonstrated, that the world is a good place. The infant uses its caregiver – usually its mother – as a base for confident exploration, protests the caregiver's departure, and is comforted on her return. It may be comforted by a stranger but shows clear preference for the familiar one.

If the mother (or other usual caregiver) responds reluctantly or inappropriately or inconsistently or (worst of all) neglectfully or abusively to the distressed infant, then various pathologies follow. The infant may show little or no distress, or it may show anger when the caregiver goes away, and little pleasure, warmth and relief when she returns. The older child is likely to be anxious or angry or frozen or disorganized in its responses, depending on the particular style that develops. The child may show disturbed play or engagement patterns with other children.

In later life, attachment becomes much more complex, with pathologies that are probably less deep and enduring, but potentially just as destructive. Like the child, human adults continue to need physical safety and nourishment, but now need opportunities for increasingly complex social engagement and for the expression and satisfaction of all the themes discussed below. Adults are more autonomous than children, more self-reliant and with much greater resources. But they still need a supply of goodies with a modicum of security, if they are to live and self-actualize freely.

Adult attachment patterns will depend on such opportunities as the natural and social environment affords – and are as varied as these opportunities themselves. That is why we must think of our attachments as *systems*: including not just the underlying need or desire, but also the means and pathways of expression and satisfaction, the efforts we have to

15 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attachment_theory

make, the relationships and groups we enter into, the roles we take on and perform. These attachment systems supply our needs, but also bind us into society and its demands. They are loci of cultural enrichment and gratification, but also of unfreedom. Christian monks and nuns take vows of poverty, not because poverty is a virtue in itself but because wealth is a distraction from something they feel to be more important. Bohemian artists take no vows, but just accept poverty to have the leisure for what they feel to be their real work. In the same spirit, Buddhists value detachment from worldly concerns, and Diogenes the cynic chose to live in a bathtub. Today, a 'voluntary simplicity' movement has developed in reaction to the ethic of hard work, 'success,' and publicly displayed affluence, promulgated by a capitalist, consumerist society.¹⁶ Though pathologies arise when people come to *expect* frustration of their desires and needs, people can be ennobled, and may do great things, when they can scrimp in some area(s) to pursue a self-actualizing project of their own with fewer material constraints.

At the same time, the wish for plentiful, secure attachment has always figured prominently in the world's religions. In ancient times, people made sacrifice to the gods, in hopes that the gods would reciprocate with adequate rainfall and bountiful crops. Still earlier, hunters took pains to propitiate the spirits of the animals they killed. Prayers at the dinner table still give thanks for the bread we eat. Voluntary poverty is all very well, but it is difficult to be creative when you don't have enough to eat.

Modern technology and social organization are creating a global pan-human attachment system – the world economy – of mind-boggling complexity power and sophistication, which treats a relatively few people very well, and a great number of others very badly. This system has its own mythos – widely challenged today and from its beginnings. By now, it has a strong dynamic of its own, driven much more by its own imperatives than by actual human needs.

Whether we see our attachments and their systems in a positive light or a negative one, beyond the bare necessities of life, they are unquestionably shapers of individuality. In our needs for air, water, food, and a reasonably stable and secure environment we are just like everybody else. But in the ways we satisfy even these basic needs, and in the values we pursue beyond them, we are amazingly diverse – more so than any other known species. Around the globe, people eat, dress and shelter themselves in different ways. Beyond all that, our ideas of 'the Good Life' are very different.

16 See www.choosingvoluntarysimplicity.com

Maslow's Hierarchy

Even so, beyond the physiological necessities of life, there is a basic similarity to our attachment systems, roughly as Abraham Maslow described with his "hierarchy of needs," as shown below. In this essay, we have no need to review, expand on, or attempt to revise Maslow's scheme. What we need to stress, however, is that the theme of Attachment, like the others discussed here, and much more directly than the others, carries with it a whole system of values and priorities which quickly begin to mobilize, direct and structure an infant's behavior, and then a child's – as Maslow's pyramid suggests:



The newborn has very basic needs, and can do just a few things with its little body. He can breathe and suckle, metabolize and excrete; he can signal its distress to caregivers; but little else. Over the next few weeks and months, the physiological processes stabilize, and the little creature gains control of his muscles which strengthen as they are exercised. His body lengthens and puts on some muscle. His brain learns to coordinate his limbs' activities. The newborn's helpless cry is followed by holding, touching and nursing, eye-contact and an exchange of smiles. From that point, sophisticated patterns of communication can develop, culminating in the acquisition of one or more languages. In just one year, the toddler taking his first steps is already, unmistakably, a willful little person, who acts intentionally, on his own initiative, for his own interests as he (at this early stage) conceives them. Given a secure attachment to his mother

and/or other caregivers for the satisfaction of his physical needs, he gradually develops what might be thought of as an immediate, increasingly rich and complex attachment to his own body – its sensations and its capabilities. These are, in turn, the medium of his most basic attachment system: to the outside world and to life itself. In this way, his body gradually learns to supply its own needs, while his mind gradually comes to understand those needs and how they can be supplied.

Studying Maslow's hierarchy of needs from the perspective Attachment, we notice that each layer suggests not only its own values, but those of the layer immediately above. The primary, physiological needs suggest values of security and plenty. This new, abstract need for security and plenty suggest still more abstract values of bonding and secure relationship – in one word, of Love. To feel securely loved, the child learns to make himself lovable – however the love of significant others must be earned. In this way arise the needs for self-esteem, achievement and the respect of others – which in turn, given also a learned understanding of one's own capabilities and talents lead to the most abstract, over-arching values of self-realization and self-transcendence (this last added subsequently to Maslow's hierarchy by Viktor Frankl).

The point to stress here that this pyramid of needs, above the first, physiological layer, is not a given, though its general form and structure seem to be implicit in the logic of human interaction. The over-all *shape* of our needs can be seen as a pyramid for that reason, but the details of each level from the second up are highly individual, as is the system that a person evolves to satisfy his needs. We could paraphrase Tolstoy perhaps, in the hokey opening sentence of *Anna Karenina*: All happy attachment systems are alike in some key respects. But each unhappy system is failing in its own way. More simply: Since no attachment system will be perfect in all respects, each such system will have its individual features and properties.

The Properties of an Attachment System

That "there ain't no such thing as a free lunch!" is an important truth not just for sales offers, but for attachment systems in general. Even mother's milk comes as a return on the effort of suckling. It has been argued that falling Energy Return on Energy Invested (EROEI) in the Western Roman Empire was one of the causes of its collapse. The same effect may have led to the collapse of Mayan and Cambodian civilizations, and is now threatening our own.¹⁷ Individuals too may fall into a lifestyle that is not sustainable in the long run. Quite commonly, attachment systems may have long-term costs that are prohibitive or lethal. Spinoza, who supported

17 e.g. by Thomas Homer-Dixon and Joseph Tainter. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Energy_returned_on_energy_invested

himself by grinding lenses and probably died from breathing too much glass dust, is a case in point.

Attachment systems have costs and risks, and may have other properties as well. Whatever benefits they provide directly, they may have side effects as well. They may be more or less pleasant. They may attract the envy, or the contempt or hatred, of others. In one's self they may induce feelings of guilt or shame or weariness or boredom. But they may induce feelings of pride as well. They may induce all the above and more in combination.

Typically attachment systems will present various trade-offs to the individuals who maintain and draw upon them. When I quit a lucrative job to teach aikido, I achieved a high degree of self-realization but took a tremendous cut in income. Later, when I did contract work for the Canadian government, I realized that I had three distinct goals in my choice of the contracts I bid on, and in my career strategy over all: Of course, I wanted to make good money; I wanted to do interesting work; and I wanted to avoid killing myself with overwork, and even to have some leisure time. I quickly found that any two of those objectives were fairly easy to achieve, but that all three together were nearly impossible. I could be poor but relaxed and happy; I could be prosperous and relaxed but bored and therefore unhappy; I could be prosperous and relatively happy, but overworked and tense. Only slightly tongue-in-cheek, I hereby propose this trilemma as law of the labor market and of life itself.

Elizabeth's Attachment System

Of Elizabeth's attachment system, we have to say that it was relatively sumptuous and secure in her infancy, childhood and early youth – and sumptuous but varyingly insecure from age 20 onward. As the presumptive leader of the Protestant and nationalist majority, her life was in danger from the date of her Catholic sister's accession in 1553. After she became queen, only five years later when she was 25, her power was continuously at risk and there were several plots against her life. Apart from these, the medicine of her day was primitive, and disease was a constant threat. Throughout her long life, she had the best of everything; on the other hand, her grip on life was no sure thing.

In infancy and early childhood, she was well cared for by a succession of nurses and nannies; it is doubtful that her mother's judicial murder (Elizabeth was only three at the time) could have affected her very much. But as she grew up, she would have learned from her own background and family history that politics was a lethal game, and that as a Tudor princess she was immersed in its games whether she liked it or not. Any royal child at that time would have learned that court life demanded circumspection and that there were few people she could fully trust.

But there were advantages. All her life, she fared very well by 16th

century standards. She received a superb humanist education, eagerly taken up, from the best tutors that could be found. She spoke, and translated classics from Latin and Greek. She was fluent too in Spanish, Italian, and German, and even knew some Welsh and Portuguese. And she was a master of English rhetoric. She could talk to ambassadors of the powers she had to deal with in their own language. Clearly, all these advantages, and the threats too, helped to make her the person that she became.

As queen, her personal safety was closely and competently guarded, though there was always the chance that some plot against her would succeed. Of course, she had access to the best medical and dental care available at that time – far below what the most ordinary people receive today. Though she surely lacked for sexual intimacy and family, and must have experienced 'the loneliness of leadership,' for most of her life she had a number of close and trusted friends. This was possible because, despite her supreme power, she was a trusted friend to them. Cecil was one such friend. Robert Dudley (Leicester) was another.

She displayed a healthy pride (what we today call 'self-esteem') without being or appearing arrogant. One reason she refused to marry was that she felt herself to be as able as any man she knew. She won the respect even of her enemies.

Looking at the values at the top of Maslow's pyramid – morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem-solving, lack of prejudice, acceptance of facts she again seems to have done pretty well, retaining a reputation as a clement prince, refusing "to make windows into the souls of men" and insisting that all loyal subjects had the right "to go to hell in their own way."

As queen, Elizabeth's attachment system centred on her problems of revenue.¹⁸ The Treasury was empty when Elizabeth came to the throne, and she owned literally dozens of tumble-down castles that were not worth their restoration and upkeep. The situation in Europe required military expenditures that she was reluctant to make – especially with funds borrowed on the Antwerp exchange at an interest rate of 14%! All her life she scrimped on defense, and kept a personal eye on her realm's finances. For fear of losing political support, she was reluctant to raise taxes or reform the tax system itself. She depended closely on funds granted to her by her Parliaments, and could not govern without them. As she refused to oblige the Commons in two of its most persistent demands: to marry and to name an heir, it sometimes took all her dexterity to keep the support she needed.

She was not without flaws, however. Though most historians have admired Elizabeth, she has also been seen¹⁹ as "a greedy, vain, indecisive penny-pincher with little grasp of strategy and utter callousness towards

18 See http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/elizabeth_finance.htm

the navy, the captains, and most particularly towards the sailors who saved her throne." On this account, she kept her throne and her head more through good luck than through wit and good management. There is some truth in this portait, and it must be agreed that she was phenomenally lucky. Yet it can be argued that she invited her good fortune – among some other ways, through the traits that Hanson deplors.

3. Adaptation: The Competent Self

The individuality of humans is partially explained, as we've already seen, by our congenital and temperamental differences, and by differences of geography and history, and family background – in a word, by the theme of Context. Individuality is shaped too by the theme of Attachment – by our differing patterns of need and desire, and by the differing systems that we are given and/or build for their satisfaction. Our third theme, that of Adaptation, has already been suggested by the fact that our attachment systems carry costs and risks. As these too will differ from one such system to another, the problems of adaptation will also differ, as will the adaptive solutions found. Individuals will be distinguished as much by these features of adaptation as by Context and Attachment, the two themes already discussed. In fact, we can say that individuals are shaped by an adaptive, evolutionary process quite similar to that which shaped *Homo sapiens*, and every other biological species. It is a process of learning through trial-and-error and natural selection – with a Baldwin effect, as already mentioned, insofar as we ourselves select the selection criteria that make the difference between reward and punishment. In this way, cultural Adaptation, like the biological kind, tends to converge toward patterns that are relatively successful and relatively resistant to change.

We know now that human infants are not "blank slates" – with minds quite empty except as experience and learning 'write' their lessons. The human genome, our biological context, has significant sensory and cognitive results – not least the propensity for symbolic representation and language. There really is such a thing as 'human nature,' but it can manifest in diverse ways, albeit with a certain underlying kinship: some important similarities. This human sameness-in-difference – Margaret Mead's point that each of us is absolutely unique, just like everyone else – is an idea that I want to stress.

Born into very different physical and social worlds, babies spend the first few years of life soaking up impressions, mimicking the gestures, behaviors and vocal productions of the adults and older children they find around them and playfully practicing the behavioral and cognitive

19 by Neil Hanson. See interview at <http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues2/2005/vol09n30/SpArmada.html>

materials they find. At the outset, this process seems like a kind of *osmosis*, whereby both regular features of the environment and pure happenstance are taken up and become formative for this individual. However, progressively and swiftly the infant's experience becomes less and less a passive 'soaking up,' and more an active encounter with the passive 'things' and willful persons (and other creatures) that he encounters. And, in one sense, the individual can be seen as a 'reflection' of the situations that he encounters and adapts to. As J.J. Gibson said, "It's not what is inside the head that is important, it's what the head is inside of."

Until the baby can crawl around a room, he lies or sits where he is placed and his adaptive capabilities seem very limited. But even at this early stage, he is already patterning his sleeping and waking, his muscle tone, eye contact and nursing behaviors to the patterns of his immediate caregivers, and to others in the family circle. He learns to learn by following the attention of others with his own, by imitating them, and by anticipating consequences of their actions. In getting his needs met, he is already learning some crucial attitudes, and the rudiments of social interaction. At this early stage, the theme of Adaptation is scarcely distinguishable from that of Attachment. But this will change soon enough, as it turns out that there is much more to coping with the world than just getting your needs and desires satisfied.

By 'Adaptation' I have in mind the whole spectrum of interaction, from perceived experience at one extreme to focused agency at the other. In general, we take in the world in order to act upon it. We witness and remember the past in order to plan for and work toward a desired future. Adaptation includes all of this; and its focus is the work that we do on ourselves, the self-organizing changes of body and mindset, that make us better able to cope with the world's demands, avoid its hazards and grasp at its resources. Adaptation is about 'going along to get along,' and about '*fitting in*' – going with the flow, bending to the wind instead of being stubborn and getting broken. A Japanese proverb has it that "The nail that sticks out will be hammered in." In English, we speak of the "tall poppy syndrome,"²⁰ in a group that cannot tolerate exceptional individuals. Scandinavians speak of the Jante Law,²¹ after a fictional Danish town called Jante, supposed to be typical of all small towns and communities everywhere where conformity makes for social harmony, and all individuality is suspect.

'Fitting in' is not a heroic value, but a prudent and tactical one. We learn it early, and we all do it to some extent – in some situations, at any rate. It should not be despised: We can't fight all battles, with everyone, all

20 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tall_poppy_syndrome

21 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jante_Law

of the time. We learn to fight the battles we think we can win, for the things we really care about. On other occasions we shrug and go along. Nor is there any reasonable blame in doing so.

The paradox is that some skill and good judgment about fitting in is a precondition for significant individuation. Some people learn to pick their battles – the ones that are winnable and worth fighting. Many others fall into either of two traps: battling always or battling never, with neither strategy making for personal development. I've always thought that the real individualist must be something of a 'ninja turtle' – in his deviance threatening to others, perhaps, but armoured against their disapproval and well-camouflaged too, so that he mostly passes unnoticed.

The world that shapes us as we adapt to it is a subjective, phenomenal world of cognized impressions and feelings – suggestions of different kinds, from three main sources: There is an inner world of bodily sensations, a social world of relationships, a material world of mere things, each making its own demands on us:

- We monitor the state of our bodies, distinguishing whether we feel well or poorly, where a pain is located, whether we are hungry, thirsty, sleepy, and so forth; and we learn to take care of ourselves according to these varied inner conditions.
- Tacitly or not, we continually re-negotiate relationships with people and other intentional beings (e.g. animals, robots, deities) all with volitions of their own which may run contrary to ours. Even if they are friends and allies, we must keep track of their beliefs and wishes, and remember that their interest in a given situation may not be the same as ours.
- We keep track of and fit ourselves into a material world of inanimate objects: all the living and non-living things lacking volition that may oppose our own, but capable of hurting us or causing damage if we are not careful with them.

Our nervous systems evolved to distinguish these categories automatically, and to handle each in a way conducive to our existence and reproductive prospects: A new-born knows nothing about the external world as yet, but it can recognize its own distress and cry for help. Within a few months he has learned to reach and grasp for things he wants and push away the things he doesn't. He also begins to learn the more complicated lesson that he is a locus of volition surrounded by other such loci which must be anticipated and taken into account. These learnings 'come naturally,' in the same sense that spoken language does: Human brains and bodies seem congenitally prepared for them and will spontaneously acquire them, with some copying of others' behaviors, but scarcely any deliberate instruction, or none at all. By contrast, reading and writing, for example, are not natural in this sense. It takes deliberate instruction and organized practice to teach the skills of literacy.

Notoriously, life is what happens while we are planning something else. In the nature of things, a large part of our adaptation must be to the unknowable future. We have to cope with a world that is always changing, and that we can never anticipate in detail, if only because its dynamics are too delicately balanced and too complex – due to the butterfly effect,²² if nothing else. If the flapping of a butterfly's wings in Brazil can affect the weather in China, then perfect weather forecasting would require the meteorologists to track the doings of every bird and insect. Plainly, this is not possible.

Humans have always feared and been fascinated by phenomena of luck and chance, the dependency of our lives and fortunes on the unknowable. Modern science regards even the rough stability of life, of the whole universe, as an effect of statistics in the last resort. Jacques Monod's book, *Chance and Necessity* (1970) explains how what we perceive as necessity actually emerges from chance: how these two concepts are intimately related, and not the opposites that they appear. But Human nervous systems find this relationship difficult to understand and to accept. We fall readily into various forms of superstition partly because it is too painful to accept bad luck and loss as meaningless happenstance, but partly because our nervous systems have evolved to interpret as 'supernatural' volition whatever cannot be understood in terms of cause-and-effect. Thus we attribute effects of pure chance to the benevolence of gods, to the nastiness of demons, or to pre-written 'fate.' One way that we adapt to events is to perceive them as much more intelligible and patterned than they really are.

A final point here is that human adaptation is more collective than individual. We are social animals: remarkably helpless as individuals, capable of incredible feats – killing a woolly mammoth or flying to the moon – when organized into groups. The world of human adaptation – the world of technology, work, commerce and capital – is now a global one. We individuate today by adapting ourselves to some tiny niche, or several of them, in a global society of unimaginable complexity.

Elizabeth

'Noblesse oblige' as the saying goes. As a princess, Elizabeth learned early that quite a lot was expected of her. The status, privilege and relative luxury of her condition came at a price, albeit one she that seems willingly to have paid. The languages she studied, the musical instruments she played, the household management skills and the social graces all followed from her title – not automatically, to be sure, but with a great deal of effort from the little girl. Whatever else, Elizabeth learned habits of diligence and self-discipline that served her well as queen. Power never

22 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butterfly_effect

went to her head, as happens with so many monarchs and leaders. She could maintain its prerogatives and use them for her purposes, but she also understood its responsibilities and its limitations.

When Mary Tudor became queen, Princess Elizabeth (age 20 at the time) had to adapt to her half-sister's Catholicism and keep a very low profile in public affairs to stay alive. When she took the throne five years later, she had the expectations for her gender, and the demands for her marriage to adapt to – in addition, of course to the state of the realm, and the intertwined religious and international situations that were now her personal responsibility. Toward the end of her long reign, now in her sixties, she had to adapt as best she could to her own aging and bodily infirmities, to the deaths of her old friends and counselors, and to the many new faces at court. With her formidable intelligence, energy, social agility and a large contribution of good luck she did so.

Sheer happenstance certainly left its mark on Elizabeth Tudor's life. Her mother's judicial murder, her own gender, and the early deaths first of her brother Edward and then of her sister Mary have already been mentioned. The interventions of Mary's husband, Phillip II of Spain, at that time was also luck for the young princess. Phillip overruled his wife's dislike and suspicious nature to keep Elizabeth alive, knowing that the former was ill and expecting to keep England in his grip by re-marriage to the latter after his wife's death.

Elizabeth's illness with smallpox in the fourth year of her reign was bad luck, of course; but her recovery was good luck – unless we attribute it to a strong physical constitution, which was also her good fortune.

The impolitic character of Mary Stuart (Queen of Scots) and her adventures and intrigues must be considered happenstance from Elizabeth's point of view. Had Mary been gifted with a more prudent nature, Elizabeth's own career might have been very different. For one thing, the Armada might not have happened. There might have been war with France instead.

Withal, as already noted, it can be argued that Elizabeth owed her success more to phenomenal good luck than to her wise decisions. In fact, she hated to make decisions and always temporized as long as possible, frequently irritating her counsellors and parliaments in doing so. Against this view it can be argued that Elizabeth invited her good luck by her temperament, good sense and over-all strategy. Random events will happen, but which ones *do* happen will depend partly on the decisions made and the situation previously created through that 'existential Baldwin effect.' The storm that finally destroyed Phillip's fleet off the coasts of Ireland was pure luck for Elizabeth, but it would not have happened without the earlier victory for English seamanship at Graveline, and her own and her father's decisions and expenditures on the navy. For that matter, it would not have happened without Phillip's decisions in the first

place. In launching his 'Enterprise of England,' Phillip surely invited his own bad fortune while offering Elizabeth the good fortune she in fact received.

The general statement to make here is that the happenstance which underpins all natural selection, learning and experience depends on the particular good that is desired and pursued. It depends on *Love*, in other words, the next theme that we'll consider.

4. Love: The Connected Self

Love is a gross exaggeration of the difference between one person and everybody else.

George Bernard Shaw

Love is that splendid triggering of human vitality the supreme activity which nature affords anyone for going out of himself toward someone else.

Jose Ortega y Gasset

Love is not consolation. It is light.

Friedrich Nietzsche

It's easy to wax cynical or sentimental about Love as a theme (if not *the theme*) of human life,²³ but when Rumi declares that love is the astrolabe of God's secrets or Thomas Carlyle says that it's the beginning of all knowledge, they have it exactly right: To learn about any thing or creature or person we must spend time with it, and give it our attention. We will not do this without either love or hatred (which can be seen as negative love). Without love, knowledge remains glib and superficial. Without a great deal of love, no really profound knowledge is possible.

In its most general meaning, 'Love' is the faculty that connects us to things and manages our giving of attention. Amongst the themes we are considering, it might be considered central for that reason. Love is the faculty that makes our sociality *personal*. Social animals without some analogue of personal love, are just anonymous creatures in a hive or herd or swarm.

From earliest infancy until death, we are defined as individuals by the things and people we love – that draw our interest and attention. Individuation is probably best understood as a progressive development and ripening – and/or shrivelling – of love: of what we can enjoy, desire, care for, and value. Love is what draws us out of ourselves and connects us to other entities, and especially to other people. If we think of attention on the analogy of a spot light that can be trained, turned up high or dimmed down, and colored through different filters, then Love is a control system managing the direction, intensity and emotional valence of that beam.

23 All these quotes about love are taken from http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/topics/topic_love.html

A Taxonomy of Love

The English word 'love' is much too vague for the psychologist's purpose. Treating Love as attention's control system at least gives him a definite system and theme to study, but at the price of broadening the concept even further and making it useless for ordinary language. Accordingly, the need for a taxonomy of Love becomes urgent. Which 'colors' or 'flavors' of Love must we distinguish?

We might start by following the thought of ancient Greeks on this subject: They were clearly right to see erotic love (broader than the strictly sexual but of that same possessive kind), the nurturing love of parents and caregivers, and the 'brotherly' love of close friendship as three very different things. They also recognized a fourth type of love called *agape* (*ah-gah-pay*) which, taken up into Christian thought, acquired such a complex theological history that its original meaning is all but lost. For Christians *agape* is the redemptive love of God for sinful Man – as in John 3:16.²⁴ For the Greeks it seems to have meant any kind of selfless, unconditional love. I think of it on the analogy of a great teacher's love for a promising pupil: the sort of love that recognizes and cultivates potentiality that is still raw and unfulfilled.

Complementary to *agape* (so understood) is the young person's choice(s) of role model for adulation and emulation. There really should be a respectful term for this type of love, as its importance for individuation can scarcely be over-rated. It is not hero-worship exactly. It is not, or need not be slavish imitation. It is not what the psychoanalysts call 'transference.' Whatever the nominal relationship, the long-term influence of such a mentor or model is potentially immense. In my own life, I can count just four persons to whom I was attracted in this way – whose attitudes, values and even certain mannerisms became a basis for my own. My father was the first of these, but the other three did not feel like or serve as parent-figures. But each of these persons had aspects to their characters that I admired and loved and wanted for myself. Aged almost 70 as I am writing this, I can still see each of them in the person I became.

In the case of Elizabeth Tudor, there were at least two influences of this kind. One was the noted scholar and classicist Roger Ascham, her second official tutor. The other, probably still more important, was Catherine Parr, Henry VIII's last wife and widow, who became Elizabeth's stepmother.²⁵ It seems to have been Catherine more than anyone else who taught Elizabeth and *showed* her how to be a queen. Both recognized the princess' gifts; Catherine actually loved her, and may have been the only

24 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agape>

25 See <http://castle.eiu.edu/historia/archives/2003/Ervin.htm>

real mother Elizabeth ever had.

She did not see much of her father, and as a monarch he may well have been a negative example for her. She had other teachers and mentors: Kat Ashley, John Cheke and John Dee, to mention three who were surely important. But we have little knowledge of her feelings for these people, while it is fairly clear that she loved both Ascham and Catherine Parr in the affiliative way I am trying to get at. She would have been a different person – and history itself would have been different – had she not known them.

* * * * *

A different scheme would classify the types of love along physiological lines – according to its neurochemistry and reflex manifestation in our bodies. Here we would have to recognize sensual pleasure and the two positive affects called *interest-excitement* and *enjoyment-joy*²⁶ as different sources of love. In this frame we would also have to recognize six types of negative love – ‘dislove’ we might call it – corresponding to the six negative affects: *distress-anguish*, *anger-rage*, *fear-terror*, *disgust*, *dissmell* and *shame-humiliation*. *Surprise-startle*, the neutral affect, is hard to see as a type of love though it is clearly a key component of the body's attention control system that causes abrupt re-direction when it is triggered.

Along with pain and pleasure, these *affects* are the bases of our *emotional* life. Unlike the emotions, which are culturally patterned and conceptualized, the affects are physiological reflexes, triggered by sufficient stimuli and biologically given. They are human universals which can be elicited and observed even in infants. In their various ways they clearly regulate and color human attention; and must be considered the bases of different types of love (and dislove) if we define Love broadly as we have done. It may feel perverse to speak of pain, anger, fear, disgust and shame as forms of Love, but it's clear that attention can be angry, fearful, etc., so that whatever controls it may be negative.

Love and Individuation

Love, then, is our blanket term for all the systems that control desire and value and attention: pleasure/pain, the affects, and whatever else; for the dials that turn these feelings up or down, on and off; and then for our memories, sweet and bitter, of situations and persons that strongly turned

26 On the nine affects, see Donald Nathanson's *Shame and Pride: Affect, Sex and the Birth of the Self* (1994), or my precis of this book at <http://www.secthoughts.com/Misc%20Essays/Shame%20and%20Personality.pdf>

those dials. As such, it's plain that Love would have to be a central theme of individuation, closely influential for all the other themes. In fact, we can see that each of our other themes gets shaped by positive and negative Love, and so will have its characteristic values. For the themes already covered, we've seen that:

- Context and Attachment set high value on generous and secure endowment; the pursuit of abundance and the avoidance of scarcity; and that
- Adaptation sets high value on fair, equal and non-coercive relationship, and on safety, security in 'fitting in.'

We'll see below that:

- Play and Expression set high value on qualities of freedom, creativity and flow;
- Sociation, like Attachment, sets high value on secure and generous attachment, but also on high ambit, self-esteem and status;
- Integration sets high value on self-actualization and wholeness; and also invokes the values of Play and Expression;
- Worldview sets high value on comprehensiveness, confidence, accuracy, and on cognitive elegance and honesty.

And we can see that each of these themes will have its negative side – its 'shadow' as we might think of it – as well. Positively or negatively, Love permeates all the other themes. Positive love has been likened repeatedly (e.g. by Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet*) to the sun, and to light itself, because it illuminates what it touches and leaves a darkness, an emptiness, where it does not. Just as we love security and plenty, we dislove deprivation and threat. The general point is that each of the themes we are considering will define one or more scales of value, evoke the theme of *Love*, and have its Shadow side, calling the theme of *Integration* into play, as we'll see below. At the same time, the capacity to love – can be discerned and considered in itself, and we can ask what it amounts to as a central faculty of human nature.²⁷

*Infants learn to love*²⁸

Psychologists have written endlessly on the love of mothers for their babies, and the importance of that love for a baby's development. One finds relatively little, however, on the reciprocated love of the baby for its mother. We know that newborns love to look at faces and, presented with a choice, will stare with fascination at the picture of a face in preference to

27 <http://www.cyberlepsy.com/love.htm>

28 See <http://news.softpedia.com/newsImage/You-Learn-to-Love-During-Infancy-2.jpg/>, http://www.ted.com/talks/paul_zak_trust_morality_and_oxytocin.html and <http://tjlmz.files.wordpress.com/2011/06/softmachine4.pdf>

anything else. We know that babies are born mimics. We know they can smile by reflex at birth or even in the womb, but quickly learn to smile responsively and then communicatively within the first few weeks and months.²⁹ But we can't really know what babies are feeling and thinking when they do these things – still less than we can know what other adults are feeling and thinking when they do what they do. We can make direct observations on both adult and infant brains, but must still infer their mental states from the physical events – by analogy with our own state in similar situations, or when similar neural firings are observed.

Still, we are on safe ground if we say that children, quite literally, are loved into existence. First, when they are conceived in the act of love between their parents; second, when they are nurtured and cared for; third, when they are engaged and recognized and smiled at by significant others, and even by strangers; fourth, and least important, when they are patiently corrected and taught.

At several points, especially right here, this essay has profited from conversations with my daughter Maya, mother of the two grandchildren to whom the piece is dedicated. 'Fierce,' 'possessive,' 'immediate' and 'not conceptual' were the qualities that came to her mind when we talked about a child's love for the first few years. But for the older child, age five as I am writing this, love is now more social and interpersonal. She already has some concept of what a person is; she understands that she is one, among perhaps 40 or 50 others that she knows. On some level, though not yet able to express it clearly, she understands that most of these people are just acquaintances, but that a few are permanent fixtures of her world. She knows that these special people love her at varying distances, and already understands something of the concept of *quid pro quo* – that their behavior toward her (including their expressive behavior) is a function somehow of hers toward them. This represents a huge advance over her infant brother (age 3 months now) who can only clutch at his mother as at life itself, make eye contact with her sometimes, and return her smile with his own. The child still has much to learn about Love; she is still a great distance from adult loving. But she is already, very clearly, a little character, a distinct individual, with impressive social skills and some sense (admittedly, still a childish sense) of what life has to offer.

Adult love

Where the love of children must be primarily needy and adaptive, that of adults can be more fully personal, more abstract and less directly selfish. Adults can love one another apart from any needy erotic passion, and long

29 For example, see <http://lucy-wholovesme.blogspot.ca/2011/10/why-babies-love-looking-at-faces.html>, <http://www.gurgle.com/news/play-learn/how-babies-imitate/1233/> and <http://www.parents.com/baby/development/laughing/how-baby-smiles-develop/>

after that type of love has faded. They can love and care for their children. They can love projects of various kinds from writing a book to making a garden, to invading another country. They can love the chores and routines and rituals of their daily lives. They can love abstractions like power, honor and duty. Sadistically, they can love the spectacle of pain and humiliation. Masochistically, they can even love the experience of pain and humiliation in tolerable doses. Not all our loves are beneficial or wholesome.

Love is not a philosophical or a religious abstraction, and it is a prime mistake to think of it as such. We will never love strangers on the other side of the world to the same degree that we love our own children, or that we love ourselves; and to preach that we *should* do so is to make nonsense of the very idea of Love. Love has its basis in human physiology and even in the genome. It is a passion – in fact, the source of all passion. It can be gentle, nurturing and creative but it can also be harsh and cruel. The idea that you should try to love your neighbors as objects of care and friendship is good advice, but only condition that you make the relevant distinctions between abstract good will, authentic fellow-feeling, and the various kinds of deeply felt love.

A further condition of effective love is that one try at the same time to find good ways of resolving or managing or at least overlooking the inevitable conflicts will arise. To be capable of loving your enemies, you must find some humane ways of fighting with your friends. The issues of conflict are real, and will need to be resolved somehow. When someone is murdered, the police look at their widow or widower as the first suspect. Crime statistics confirm the saying that "Love is finding that special person who will annoy you for the rest of your life."

Elizabeth

Of Elizabeth's loves and disloves a great deal is known. Some of these have already been mentioned, and more will be later on. Among other things, she loved books and music and bear-baiting. She loved to ride and hunt and dance. She loved her own role with its perks and powers, though it was often wearisome, and the more so as she grew older.

From before her accession almost until her death, she loved to be surrounded by gallant young men – Robert Dudley, Christopher Hatton, Walter Raleigh, Robert Devereaux, and others. She used them in her regime, advanced their fortunes, and encouraged them to court her without actually succumbing to their advances. Dudley had been a close friend of her youth, well before her accession to the throne. They were almost the same age, and their relationship was a real love affair; for quite a while he hoped she would marry him, and had reasons to think she might. It never happened, but he remained among her first courtiers and her intimate friend until his death in 1588 (age 56) some 15 years before her own.

It has been suggested that these affairs were just vanity on her part – that she was a supremely vain woman, greedy for flattery.³⁰ I think it more likely that the first dalliance with Dudley was a real adventure of her youth, thwarted first by politics and then by her accession. I have no doubt that she enjoyed the attentions and flattery of handsome young men, but would see such courtly dalliance as a game of public image-building, bringing to it her political skills and playfulness rather than personal vanity. She was a queen after all, and a consummate politician.

On this question it is surely relevant that she dangled the prospect of marriage before half a dozen or so foreign princes, using herself as bait in a fairly cynical diplomatic game. Cold she could be: What was at stake had nothing to do with love, but rather with power and dynastic alliance. But neither should it be confused with personal vanity. In this game the noble women of the time were just so many brood mares. Elizabeth had too much character and self-confidence to be one, but she could put herself on the market as such for whatever advantage she could gain. She could demand her courtiers' attentions and flattery as part of her solution to the problems of being a female monarch. As an old lady, the game had become more than a bit ridiculous; but by then it was a habit, and a custom of her court – easier to keep up than to alter.

It must be relevant too that a number of Elizabeth's senior-level servants also enjoyed her sincere personal friendship: William Cecil, John Dee and Lady Catherine Knollys would be examples. There could be no doubt that she was the queen: only Robert Devereaux (Essex) was foolish enough to presume on her friendship, and he eventually paid with his life for doing so. But she attended William Cecil when he was dying and spoon-fed him when he could no longer feed himself.

In maturity, the central feature of Elizabeth's love system, as she herself seems to have felt, was for the English nation and people. On several occasions, most famously in her last speech to the House of Commons, she expressed a belief that though the English people might have a wiser prince than herself, they would never have a more loving one. Though this was obviously good politics, I think she was being truthful here, trying to say something real about herself. The passage is worth quoting in full:

To be a king and wear a crown is a thing more glorious to them that see it than it is pleasant to them that bear it. For myself I was never so much enticed with the glorious name of a King or royal authority of a Queen as delighted that God hath made me his instrument to maintain his truth and glory and to defend his kingdom as I said from peril, dishonour, tyranny and oppression. There will never Queen sit in my seat with more zeal to my country, care to my subjects and that will sooner with willingness venture her life for your good and safety than myself. For it is my desire

30 See *The Courtships of Queen Elizabeth*, Martin Hume (1904) p.388

to live nor reign no longer than my life and reign shall be for your good.
And though you have had, and may have, many princes more mighty and
wise sitting in this seat, yet you never had nor shall have, any that will be
more careful and loving.³¹

My impression is that Elizabeth not only meant these words but defined herself by them: made them a central feature of her identity. In part, she must have loved her people like the children she never had. But one could say just as well that she refused to marry and have children because she loved her role as a regnant queen.

5. Play/Expression: The Transcending Self

On Monsieur's Departure

I grieve and dare not show my discontent,
I love and yet am forced to seem to hate,
I do, yet dare not say I ever meant,
I seem stark mute but inwardly do prate.
I am and not, I freeze and yet am burned,
Since from myself another self I turned.

My care is like my shadow in the sun,
Follows me flying, flies when I pursue it,
Stands and lies by me, doth what I have done.
His too familiar care doth make me rue it.
No means I find to rid him from my breast,
Till by the end of things it be suppress.

Some gentler passion slide into my mind,
For I am soft and made of melting snow;
Or be more cruel, love, and so be kind.
Let me or float or sink, be high or low.
Or let me live with some more sweet content,
Or die and so forget what love ere meant.

Elizabeth Tudor (1581) breaking off plans for marriage with François, Duc d'Anjou

One of the most persistent errors in scientific psychology has been its tendency to over-emphasize response behaviors at the expense of spontaneously originated ones. The former are much easier to study and think about, but the latter play at least as great a role in making us what we are. This seems to be the case for most animals. Though many activities are internally triggered by some pain or itch or appetite, many others have no clear trigger at all. Even where behavior has a definite trigger, there will be considerable autonomy in shaping the details of action. For example, a growling stomach may suggest that it is time to eat, but the choice of what gets taken from the fridge, prepared, placed on a plate and eaten, is a matter of preference and self-expression, generated internally

31 Elizabeth I, "The Golden Speech" to Parliament, November 30th, 1601

from mindset – the previous learning and habituation of a brain. Even within the first few months of life, much observed behavior is less a response than a playful provocation of situations. Babies are little flirts.³² They are cute and they seem to know it. They love positive attention and know how to get it.

I might have chosen to treat play and expression separately, or to treat expression as a kind of play, or to treat play as the ground of all self-expression. Each of these approaches would be valid enough, yet it seems to me that these two concepts belong together as a single motif of human individuation. What they have in common are qualities of spontaneity, autonomy and freedom that are marginal or lacking for the other themes. As they seem also to be completely intertwined, I will write of 'Play/Expression' as a single theme. By definition, its outputs are *not* predictable responses to the stimuli we receive, but novel, autonomous – above all, *gratuitous* – self-expressions that may or may not respond directly to anything at all.

Elizabeth's poem is a fine example of why the concepts of Play and Expression belong together: It expresses sadness and is completely serious; yet it sublimates the queen's grief spontaneously and playfully in verse. Nothing constrained Elizabeth to write it; no functional purpose was served in writing it except to 'get something off her chest,' as we say: to craft an artifact from an emotion. Poetry *per se* is playful speech. In this poem, even the request for death is no more than literary convention. In real life, Elizabeth was anything but suicidal. In the poem she both expresses grief and plays with it at the same time.

Yet having argued that 'Play/Expression' comprise a single theme, these concepts in themselves are distinct. Play is pre-eminently something that young animals (including human children) do to practice the use of their own bodies and prepare themselves for adult life. Expression is literally a 'pushing-out' – a bringing of something inside into the real and public world. We'll consider these two concepts separately before bringing them back together.

Play

In some circles, play has a bad reputation – fine for children, but not beyond the age when serious study or labor commences. In society at large, 'work' and 'play' are considered antithetical, and the phrase 'serious play' is heard as a contradiction in terms. This depreciation of play is a tragic misunderstanding, and a great waste of human potential and human life. Play is the realm of freedom – of free self-creation and self-transcendence. From that perspective, as we will see, it's the most serious activity of all.

32 See <http://www.nasw.org/users/sibylle/cribscientist.html>

Many young mammals play – and take risks and expend a great deal of energy in doing so. In play they strengthen their young bodies, practice valuable survival skills and establish dominance hierarchies without fighting 'for real.' The play of human babies and children serves all these functions, but it reaches levels of complexity found in no other species. Also, where most other species mature out of this playing phase, human play continues into adulthood and throughout life, given the smallest surplus to support it. It is an aspect of human neoteny – the retention of juvenile traits into adult life – and a characteristic of human biology as such. As it comes at substantial cost in time and energy, and often risk as well, we have to ask what compensating benefit is conferred by the play of human grown-ups?

That benefit has many aspects, but in one word I think it can be characterized as a *transcendence* of the here-and-now – of present-moment sensations and perceptions into some imagined, counter-factual alternative. This transcendence is partly cognitive, but partly active and pragmatic. In play one typically enters into and (in a sense) 'experiences' an imaginary world, and typically engages in behaviors appropriate for that play world but not for the 'real' world of ordinary life. The 'experience,' however, has a peculiar quality in that the contribution of 'make-believe' remains quite clear, even while the emotional tone – exhilaration or fear or exaltation or whatever – belongs to the play-world, not the real one. Even the kitten chasing a ball of wool readily learns the difference between that ball and a real mouse, but may continue to chase the ball when no mouse is present. A five-year-old kid playing 'spaceman' or 'cowboys and indians' remains aware of his real identity. Notwithstanding, the excitement of the game is 'real' enough, and the child is loathe to put it aside.

The imagined world may be an accurate memory of past experience, or an unconscious fabrication. It may be a more or less plausible future that one either does or does not try to achieve. It may be pure fantasy, known to be false or impossible, but entertained nonetheless. Or the perceived world may remain real enough, while one allows oneself to entertain desires and imagined actions that one would never carry out. Or the world one imaginatively enters may be the real world of someone else. In each case, the mind at play enters and operates in a counter-factual dimension, off the 'flat' surface of ordinary life. Even the playing kitten or chimp is doing this to some extent. But the play-worlds of humans are of unprecedented complexity, and our joy in play is life-long. For it should be noted and underlined that play is pleasurable – certainly for humans and, to all appearances, for animals as well. Whether it is the freedom of play, its self-expression, its balancing of capability and challenge,³³ we experience play as *fun*. One might feel embarrassed to be playing when

33 That Csikszentmihalyi called 'flow.' See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flow_psychology

there is work to do, but the activities of play need no external justification: play is felt to be worth doing for its own sake.

Play's transcendence of the here-and-now, and our virtuosity in doing so, must be a key aspect of our humanity. As *time-binding* creatures (in Alfred Korzybski's memorable phrase), humans live in some imagined past or future, even more than in the present sometimes. Humans could not be such skillful fabricators if we could not imagine and work to bring about some alternative reality, conceived as preferable in some way to the one that now exists. Language is *fundamentally* playful insofar as it presupposes a partial separation from immediate reality into a realm of imagined entities that are not necessarily present to the senses. Social participation is *fundamentally* playful insofar as we can only learn our roles by first imagining ourselves into them. Even purposeful work is fundamentally playful insofar as it is oriented toward some imagined goal that has not yet been realized. We are in some play-world not just when we actually play a game, or play with a toy, but when we read a book, or watch a movie or take part in any ritual or ceremony. Play begins early, and it remains a part of every fully human life.

To many people, the phrase 'serious play' sounds like an oxymoron – a contradiction in terms. This is unfortunate, because many of our best and worst pursuits are tremendously serious, and continue to have a major element of play, even when they do not feel at all playful. Science and religion have large play components insofar as both, in their very different ways, imagine realities and relationships beyond the obvious. All competitive, rule-bound sports are playful; and even politics and war have their playful aspects. For many business people, their enterprises and careers are serious games, with money the way of keeping score.

All-in-all, I don't think it's possible to understand the modern world and its issues until we recognize how serious play can be. It's quite true, if a tad sexist, that the chief difference between men and boys is the price of their toys. Girls' toys may be simpler perhaps, but their play is every bit as ferocious.

Expression

The play of young animals is a practice of instinctively grounded skills that will be needed for survival. By contrast, the expression of animals seems to have its roots in the calls and dances that invite a conspecific to mate. Of course, animals communicate for other reasons as well: e.g. to warn of danger or point out a food source. But the most elaborate and spectacular of their expressive displays typically surround and instigate the sex act. Human expression is as elaborate and gratuitous as human play, but it too focuses on sex as often as not. What novel or film does not have its love-interest? How many popular songs are neither about winning a lover nor losing one?

But human expression is as multifaceted as human play. Like our play, it has been co-opted to serve every purpose under the sun, but is its own purpose, as often as not. The last episode of David Attenborough's TV series *Life On Earth*, aptly called *The Compulsive Communicators*,³⁴ aptly characterizes our own species by focusing on the variety and elaboration of human expressive behaviors – and on a noticeable obsessiveness that drives them.

As we noted in connection with Elizabeth's poem, human expression, is a 'pushing-out' of mindset – some aspect of mindset – into the public world. It is often playful, but need not be. In fact, most behavior must be responsive and adaptive, but expressive at the same time: adaptive insofar as it is triggered by and appropriate to external circumstances, but expressive insofar as it is internally detailed and shaped, and fundamentally communicative (i.e. suggestive) in purpose. In fact, we can look at any behavior as a kind of personal signature: You may sign on the dotted line when asked, but *how* you sign says quite a lot about how you see yourself and how you want to be seen by others. Elizabeth's royal signature shows this clearly. We can see it as an adaptation, giving legal force to whatever text went above. As such, it had to be recognizable, assertive and difficult to forge. But we must see it as expressive also, because it seems stylistically *right*, stylistically in keeping, with everything else we know about Elizabeth: the way she lived and danced and dressed, and the way she spoke on public occasions. The signature is one compact statement of how she saw herself, her role and her position and of how she wished these to be seen by others. There were many such statements. Hers was a class act, in the most literal sense.



34 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_on_Earth_%28TV_series%29

Insofar as the things we do have an expressive dimension, we can view and judge them not just for what they physically accomplish but for what they communicate. Indeed, the latter function is often the more important. If I were to offer a signed copy of my book to someone I thought was a friend, and this person promptly threw it into her fireplace, she would certainly be destroying the physical artifact but, more significantly, she would be saying that she did not think very much of me, did not want my present, did not care enough about our friendship to thank me politely and then put the book on her shelf and ignore it. She would be communicating quite a lot, very strongly, and I in turn would expressively stomp out of her house, slamming the door as I did so. In such transactions, relationships are wrought – or, in this case, demolished.

* * * * *

More obviously than with most other themes, human individuation plays the themes of Adaptation and Play/Expression contrapuntally, as one might say; and in that counterpoint, the social universe is wrought. We can think of any society as a network of relationships, and of these relationships as sequences of adaptively appropriate expression. We become the individuals we are as we learn to function in these relationships – to express ourselves and understand the expressions of others. Much of an infant's behavior is almost random. They thrash around and learn to manage their own bodies in doing so. Much of children's activity takes place under the rubric of Play/Expression – free, spontaneous, and not in response to any immediate stimulus. Adult activities and relationships are shaped to a much greater extent by necessity and by requirements of adaptation, but even adults find outlets for their leisure time, and for whatever extra energy they have. Even adults find ways to play and to express themselves, proportionate to their wealth and leisure and their cultural capital. Expression with some admixture of play is at the core of human relationship and individuation.

Elizabeth

In the 16th century, much of the activity at any monarch's court was consciously designed as an expression of power, wealth and sovereignty. The palace buildings, the groves and gardens, the rituals, ceremonies and entertainments, the elaborate costumes and the etiquette were all designed to centralize the realm's governance at the monarch's court, and to express the irresistible splendor that centralization. Monarchs competed with one another to mount the most impressive show, and this competition was one aspect of their regime and their diplomacy. The idea was to convey an impression of irresistible greatness and power, as it still is, for that matter.

The Renaissance court reached a limit of absurdity a few generations

after Elizabeth's time, in the Versailles of Louis XIV; but in her day, it was still sound and viable. The court was a magnet for talent and ambition, and a cockpit in which the nobles would compete for royal favor rather than engage in feudal warfare. In an age before mass media, it was the center of the rumor mill. It was a marriage mart. Of course, it was also a center for the discussion and disposition of public affairs. Whatever else, it was a stage set before England and the whole of Europe with the queen herself as its star. One of its central functions was to advertise the monarch's power and splendor, as much to England's lesser nobles and commoners as to foreign ambassadors and visitors.

Presiding over her court's amusements, rituals, processions and pageants – over its play, in one word – was an important part of Elizabeth's work. For some monarchs, notably her most formidable and persistent adversary Phillip II of Spain, one gets the impression that the splendor of court life was more a part of their job description than an aspect of their character; but for Elizabeth, it clearly was both. For the most part, she took pleasure in being queen, and the style and splendor of her court expressed that pleasure. Certainly we find one side of Elizabeth's character in the clothes she wore for ceremonial occasions and portraiture,³⁵ and in the entertainments she enjoyed.

She loved to dance, and was an expert at the galliard, a difficult, athletic dance that was popular in her time.³⁶ Not only dancing keenly in the festivities with her courtiers, she did it alone for her morning exercise. She loved music also, and was herself an accomplished performer on the virginals and the lute.

Not all her pastimes were so genteel. She was an expert and avid horsewoman, made Leicester (Robert Dudley) her Master of Horse, and rode with him hard and often. She loved to hunt, using the crossbow as her weapon. She also enjoyed the cruel sport of bear-baiting, also popular at the time. It is reported that she loved to swear, and had a colourful repertoire for doing so.

In general, one thing that strikes us about Renaissance political life is the playfulness – some have said childishness – of its power games, which were often bloody, but always gaudily expressive. The advent of Protestantism, capitalism and democracy, were to transform this style completely; and in Elizabethan England, this was already happening. But Elizabeth herself resisted the trend, (for example, defending both the theatricals and the bear-baiting against the Puritan faction pressing for a more austere atmosphere at court). Politically, it might have been easier to go along or compromise with their demands, but the queen enjoyed her

35 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portraiture_of_Elizabeth_I_of_England

36 See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galliard> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lDCxv3Hv2g&feature=related>

games and entertainments far too much to give them up.

7. Sociation: The Anchored Self

Sociation can be seen, and usually *is* seen, as a person's over-all Adaptation to the demands and incentives of society, but I think it is worth distinguishing as a separate theme. Where Adaptation is about competence, self-protection and survival, Sociation is about identity and the anchoring of Self to a social role. It's not a question just of getting along, but of taking up, occupying and living up to some definite niche in the social world – and of deriving some abstract but crucial benefits in doing so: *meaning, belonging, self-actualization, identity*, (whichever words we care to use). It's about self-understanding and self-presentation to others – and yes, Adaptation: the construction of an interface, a zone of compromise between the self and the outside world.

Typically today, sociation is divided between a world of work and a domestic world of mating and family. There may be significant leisure activities and/or religious activities as well. Today these realms are separate, but in tribal societies they were not. People were born into, or married into a social group that was concerned as much with economic production as with sexual reproduction, and their individuation remained constricted by their tribal membership. As in the past, however, adult sociation today is about making a living, making a family, making and maintaining friends and allies, keeping their loyalty and their trust, while protecting and projecting an intelligible identity.

Like the other themes, Sociation commences in childhood, when we can already observe a slender departure from more the basic motives of Attachment and Adaptation. But the distinction from Adaptation becomes clear as soon as 'identity' is at stake – when the child becomes self-conscious enough to perceive himself as a distinct individual in the game of life, and to care about the impression he makes on others. For a child, especially a child with siblings, this new theme is about fitting in with family politics, defending his autonomy, getting his share (and a little more if possible) of desirable attention, and whatever other goodies might be available. At any age, Sociation is about role and alliances and living arrangements and, above all, about identity: the decision to be and to present oneself as a certain kind of individual, and not some different kind.

To see the difference between Adaptation and Sociation, consider the situation of a spy or double agent: To survive and operate, the spy must fit in with his milieu – pass as a native in every respect – while his real loyalties are elsewhere. The double agent has an even more difficult problem. His loyalty is already in question by both sides; and an acceptable *pretence* of loyalty to both is the key feature of Adaptation in his double game. Only he can know for sure (if even he can know), where

his identity and ultimate loyalties are found.

Even 'normal' people, not caught up in the make-believe world of espionage, may still experience their lives as a two-faced game of public *persona* and private *self*, with identity as interface and mediator between the two. For the child already, there will be a distinction between 'existential' Adaptations that alter the sense of self, and merely pragmatic ones that do not. Only in the former does the theme of Sociation appear. Only in existential Adaptations are we adjusting not just behavior, but self-understanding. Rather than distinguish between these two kinds of Adaptation, however, it is more convenient to speak of Sociation as a separate theme.

Sociation comes to prominence in young adulthood, at the age when people are choosing their careers and mates. But it commences in childhood, as I've suggested, and it continues throughout life, as soon as issues of identity come into question.

Admittedly, the distinction can be a fuzzy one. Adaptive behavior can be so habitual and automatic as to become, for all practical purposes, a feature of identity. You become what you pretend to be, as Kurt Vonnegut said. Still, there is a clear difference between the recent PhD who drives a cab until he can land a job in his field, and the man who drives a one because he aspires to nothing else. Adaptation is what we do to survive and get along in the world; sociation is a claim we make to the world about who and what we are. Quite often, people will die or allow themselves to be killed rather than abandon the claim they've chosen.

Early on it was pointed out that the concept of *role* does not come near to covering what people draw from their groups and societies. In fact, the ligatures that bind us back to the society that extruded us are numerous and subtle, as are the possibilities that remain to us for authenticity and individuation. We are, or at least *can be*, rather more than puppets kerked by the strings of role, or even by culture as a whole.

This is not to say that roles are unimportant as features of identity. On the contrary: We take roles early on, from our position and standing in a family; and these roles are surely influential as our identities are formed. But it is only with full adulthood that our identities '*harden*,' as they come to underpin critical responsibilities that others depend upon. Indeed, the assumption of such responsibility is what we mean by full adulthood, whatever age is set by law.

But fundamentally, Sociation is a *causa sui* project addressing the twin problems of self-definition and self-presentation: first, what you need to believe about yourself to operate effectively in the world; and second, how you wish to be seen and respected by others. As a structure of mindset that results, identity plays a crucial role not only in life's largest choices, but in its smallest also. Thus, for example, identity structures coordinate:

- a given individual's sensory sampling of his environment (i.e. his selective attention and blindness);
- his activities in response to the environment (i.e. his skills and habits);
- selective obedience to the customs, norms and roles of his community; the social 'face' that he presents;
- selective cooperation and relationships with significant others and with expanding circles of 'public' (neighborhood, workplace, city, nation, and so forth);
- prioritization, timing and serialization of activities;
- access to memories;
- construction of imaginative counter-factuals;

and much more. Reciprocally, as part of the same theme, our sociation includes some influence, greater or less, on the groups to which we belong – which we, in fact, comprise though our participation.

Rabbi Hillel famously asked, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am for myself only, what am I?" In our sociation we answer Hillel's question, yet there is always a price for doing so. You choose a career at the expense of other talents and interests. You choose a mate and control your roving eye for the sake of domestic peace. There is an amplification and *repression* of feelings – a blocking off and forgetting of interests and aspects of self as authentic as any other. There are 'opportunity costs' for all the choices we make; and, as we've seen, each of the themes carries values that have their negative side. Just how we pay that price, deal with the Jungian 'Shadow' of our values, is the theme of Integration in the next chapter.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth surely had a lot of adapting to do, but one's initial impression is that her identity was almost handed to her – or, indeed forced upon her: first when she was born a princess, and then when she inherited the throne after the deaths of her brother and her older sister. Her only real sociation-choice on both occasions was whether and how far to embrace the roles she had been handed. In her case, the commitment seems to have been total, but it need not have been. Her sister Mary Tudor saw herself as a good Catholic first, and queen of England second. Her cousin and rival never did understand her job as queen. Had Mary Stuart possessed Elizabeth's intelligence and self-control, had Elizabeth been as wanton as Mary, the outcomes might have been very different. In the event, Elizabeth committed herself totally to her role as queen of England. She had, and was willing to give, all that the role required of her.

The identity she devised and presented was a masterpiece of Expression, as we have seen, though it followed logically from her

situation as prince and sovereign of a people just emerging from their feudal rivalries and knitting together as a nation. She was "mere English," as she liked to say; she was "the Virgin Queen," and as such the loving mother of her people. In every royal progress around her realm, in every speech to Parliament or elsewhere, in her public appearances and in the portraits she gowned herself and sat for, she labored constantly to put that image across. But it is doubtful that her propaganda could have been so effective if her feelings had not been authentic, and had there not been as well 'a willing suspension of disbelief' in her courtiers and subjects. To the limit of what was possible, Elizabeth made herself into the monarch her subjects wanted – an effective majority of these, at any rate. But she was too intelligent and too self-aware to become possessed by that role – to believe in it completely. In her story there is still the sense of a real person, a whole Self, conscious of the price she was paying.

Like any monarch, she was the apex and cynosure of her court, and as such, a nucleus for the sociation of others. Men and families that hoped for social advancement had to compete for her favor, and make of themselves what she needed or wanted them to be. Think first of William Cecil, Francis Walsingham and Robert Dudley, the three men on whom her government most closely depended. Think of Robert Devereux, the 2nd Earl of Essex, the favorite of her old age, whose ambition and energy led first to his marvelous elevation, then to his treason and death by the headsman's axe. Think of Francis Drake, '*El Draco*,' scourge of the Spanish Main who was the first Englishman to sail around the world and was knighted by Elizabeth for doing so. Think of Walter Raleigh who suppressed several revolts in Ireland, attempted the first English colony in the New World and was also knighted by the queen. These are just the most famous examples of Elizabeth's impact on people's careers and lives. There were many others.

The queen had estates, monopolies, positions, titles and honors in her gift, but they were not unlimited; and she had to make clever use of them to attract the service and loyalty on which her regime depended. It was a system of royal patronage – and therefore, of managed sociation. Elizabeth 'made' and 'unmade' her courtiers, not just in a financial or social sense but in a deeper sense as well: She cultivated them for her purposes, nourishing and correcting them much as a gardener waters and trims her plants, to form them as her instruments. This was part, a very large part, of her own role as queen and she was very good at it. With most of these individuals she wonderfully succeeded; that we remember them as 'great,' is often her achievement as much as their own. But in the case of Robert Devereux (Essex), working with a flawed instrument, she famously failed.

We may also consider Elizabeth's sociation and identity from the perspective of various critics whom she disappointed in one respect or another. In the nature of things, she could not please everyone: no leader

can. The core of Elizabeth's achievement was to forge a mythical identity that could hold her country together by balancing and spreading the discontent of various factions who agreed in their fundamental nationalism, in wanting a strong and autonomous country, but who differed greatly in their visions of the kind of country it should be:

To begin with, her nation was divided on religious lines. There were many who did not really accept Elizabeth's father's break with Rome but wanted to worship in the traditional Catholic way. Against them were the Puritans, Protestants of a Calvinist stripe, who rejected (what they saw as) Papist mumbo-jumbo, regarding the Church of Rome as an abomination. Neither faction was happy with the Henrician dispensation: a centralized, *national* communion, with the monarch at its head. So-called 'Anglicans' went along with this compromise, but two large blocs, both very dangerous from Elizabeth's perspective would not. From this perspective, her self-definition as "the Virgin Queen" becomes completely intelligible. Henry VIII had *declared* himself the head of the English Church. His daughter actually had to *be* that head – emotionally, as well as legally – as her father never was. Protestants of all stripes rejected Catholic Mariolatry but, in those early days, would buy a mother-substitute: the identity that Elizabeth assumed.

Apart from this, Elizabeth's religious policy was completely pragmatic. (I will describe her personal beliefs in Chapter 8 on Worldview.) The Catholic faction was dangerous because it might support a Catholic claimant to her throne with the support (and under the control) of either Spain or France – both more powerful than England at that time. The Puritan faction was, if possible, even more dangerous to Elizabeth's throne because its rejection of the Pope's authority led easily (as, in fact, happened later) to a rejection of the monarch's authority and of authority in general. To manage these extremes, Elizabeth had to keep a delicate balance, and she was remarkably skillful, but also lucky, in doing so. She would punish people for breaking the law, but not for their opinions. She would punish treason and sedition, but not religious dissent. She could make and unmake law, so long as the Puritans in Parliament did not gain the upper hand, but she could not always control the excesses of zealous Puritan-sympathizing officials. She did her best to hold this balance and, on the whole, her policy worked: Puritans not intolerably extreme in their views were not molested. Most Catholics learned that they could go on being Catholic so long as they made a show of what was usually the case, that they were loyal Englishmen who would never put their Catholic loyalties first. Elizabeth's political identity stemmed from her need to make these concessions tolerable.

Apart from the religious issue, entangled with considerations of foreign policy and defense, there were class issues as well. The England of Elizabeth's time was a stratified society with a landed aristocracy, a

'middle' class of wealthy manufacturers and merchants, and a growing population of commoners, gradually losing their feudal rights and migrating to the cities. The queen, accordingly, was pulled in several directions. On one hand, herself the realm's biggest landed noble, she naturally wanted to assert and preserve the aristocracy's ancient privileges. As the chief executive of what was becoming a modern nation, she needed money for defense. The country was threatened; armies and navies were increasingly expensive; she needed revenues from the wealthy 'middle' class to meet her costs, and could not govern without the support of its representatives in Parliament. Last, but by no means negligibly, she was the queen of commoners as well. She needed their loyalty, and wanted their love, as we have seen. Mostly she got it – holding her realm together, as her Stuart successors could not, through a political identity that remains legendary to this day.

Much like a modern politician in this respect, Elizabeth tried to govern through a consensus of her notables – of those with means to make their displeasure felt. In that aim she was largely successful, except in Ireland where she left a legacy of hate and bitterness that lasted until the late 20th century until it could begin to be resolved.

In part, Elizabeth's policies can be directly blamed for this. In her defense it can be said that there were no good options available. With Catholic France to the east, just across the Channel, and Catholic Spain to the south, there was legitimate fear that England's navy would be spread too thin to offer real protection. To the English, Ireland was a barbarous, primitive place from which Spain could launch invasions at any time.

At this time, "the Emerald Isle" was by no means a united realm that might have been handled through diplomacy and politics, as was finally done with Scotland. A policy of "winning hearts and minds" would have been prohibitively expensive, as was a standing army of occupation. The policy actually chosen (well before Elizabeth's reign) was to encourage English colonization, while maintaining a small garrison and sending troops to help in emergencies. The attempt to extend the Henry VIII's Reformation (Anglicanism) to Ireland was a complete failure as use of the Reformed Prayer Book could not be enforced. Catholicism became synonymous with Irish patriotism – as remained the situation almost to the present day.

* * * * *

Insofar as Elizabeth originated or approved these various policies, and staked the success of her regime upon them, they can be considered as features of her own sociation: her role, identity and self-presentation. Indeed, they remain so, as features of her legacy – as do the deeds and major choices of anyone at all. And again like anyone's – writ large, of course, because she was a monarch – Elizabeth's sociation affected lives

beyond her own. Though she was a clement ruler, unlike her father, for example, the fortunes of many were affected by her choices, in some cases, fatally so. Sailors and soldiers died because of her decisions, and a few were executed. Some felt she chose wrongly, or went too far. Some felt that she did not go far enough. In just this way, human identities and the sociation strategies they reflect are entangled with one another, and subject to negotiation both tacit and explicit.

Every choice, every action has its opportunity costs, leaving a residue of regret or, at least a curiosity about what life would have been had the choice gone differently. Hence the next chapter's theme, *Integration*, which might be seen as an attempt to have things both ways – to feed the wolf while keeping the sheep whole. Where the choices of sociation cast a kind of shadow, as we have seen, with key aspects of self hidden away or thrown into eclipse, our projects of Integration are about the preservation or recovery of wholeness.

8. Integration: The Unrealized Self

A god can do it. But . . .

Song, as you have taught it, is not desire,
not wooing any grace that can be achieved;
song is reality. Simple, for a god.

But when can *we* be real?

Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus* I, 3 (Stephen Mitchell's translation)

A . . . man's reach should exceed his grasp, Or what's a heaven for?

Robert Browning, *Andrea Del Sarto*

We've seen that sociation comes at a price. To make a life for oneself, to take on and play some definite role in society, aspects of the self must be put aside to sustain and present the traits that this role demands. We stifle, even *repress*, what does not fit; and these traits, these impulses, in true ecological fashion, do not just go away but become a kind of Shadow (to using Carl Jung's term) of the publicly presented Self. In a poet's sense, or a psychotherapist's, we become unreal to that extent. Then we find ourselves plodding through life, speaking only dull prose, having lost the authenticity that would let us *sing*.

I call the theme of this section '*integration*,' while agreeing with Rilke that psychic wholeness, completeness, is an ideal that no one can fully realize, though everyone feels his life to be incomplete in certain ways. Let's begin this section by trying to imagine what completeness would mean, and then go on to review some means by which we pursue that state, or attempt to compensate for its loss.

Wholeness and Residue

The Western world's great myth of wholeness is the story of Adam and

Eve in Eden, which imagines a time before self-conscious individuality became possible. In fact, before history began, there really was a time when all humans lived in hunting-and-gathering societies, still at one with Nature, and wholly embedded in their tribal groups. Under these conditions, the question of individuation is scarcely raised; and integration, to the extent that it is humanly possible, is a given.

Well short of this Edenic state, we can imagine an ideal of individuated wholeness, free from doubts of any kind, and free of all competing suggestions. In this condition, there would be no shame and no inhibition, no delay between desiring something and going after it. Wish and act would coincide, without the slightest hesitation. Japanese kendo – sport fencing with a two-handed bamboo sword – aims at such a state.

Kendo, aikido and other martial arts have a concept called *zanshin* – literally, 'remaining mind' – for the stance and mental attitude that remain after an action is complete.³⁷ Here, we too must speak of a kind of *zanshin* (a 'residue' as I will call it) for that which remains of Self apart from the roles and obligations of Socation – whether these are satisfactorily discharged or slighted. This 'residue' is a broader notion than the Jungian 'shadow' which is too dark, too negative for my purpose. What I mean by 'residue' need not be evil, nor antisocial in any way, though it may well be both. In itself, it is simply 'what is left over' – desires left unsatisfied, feelings left unexpressed, capabilities left under-utilized, and so forth. These may or may not be dangerous to others, or to the social order. Whether they are so or not, they press for expression or actualization on some terms or other; and the theme of Integration is about actualizing, compensating or 'sublimating' them in some manner.

This theme of Integration can be imagined as a struggle of residue against the individual's social commitments and public 'face.' What fits comfortably and finds expression under the terms of one's socation is, by definition, no loss or threat to wholeness and in no need of integration. Integration is the project of recovering and expressing the suppressed aspects of self that have no place in the individual's public, inter-personal life. The problem is to express and actualize this 'residue' in some reasonably safe and harmless fashion, and most societies provide 'outlets' for doing so: Religion is a crucial vehicle for this purpose among others: In many societies, our own included, people save up for Sunday (or whichever 'holy' day) the values they have no use for on working days, but know are too important to ignore.

The arts, notably music and dance can also be seen as vehicles of integration. Sports and games are means by which the dangerous impulses of aggression and conflict are given controlled expression. Hobbies of many kinds, from gardening to stamp collecting to mushroom hunting to building ships in bottles, are outlets for other impulses, and for unutilized

37 See <http://www.jiyushinkai.org/zanshin.html>

skills as well. Many societies have provided festivals of buffonery, role reversal and orgy, (e.g. the Roman 'Saturnalia,' or the medieval 'Feast of Fools,'³⁸) in which the normal social order is inverted, and its rules are put aside. Our own puritanical society is somewhat unusual in not affording an approved safety valve of this kind. We pay the price with alcoholism, and the widespread use of so-called 'recreational drugs' – which would be better thought of as vehicles of escape than of recreation.

In general, the theme of Integration is closely linked with, but not identical to that of Play/Expression; these themes overlap, but do not coincide. For one thing, Play/Expression, notably that of children, serves other purposes than Integration which is barely an issue until Sociation exacts significant costs. On the other hand, the addictive vices like drugs, alcohol and tobacco seem more compulsive than playful or expressive, especially once their practitioner is 'hooked.' They are self-defeating attempts at integration, but quickly lose the spontaneity of play, and cease to express anything much except the craving itself. Finally, the aims of these themes are different: Play/Expression is about imaginative exploration, as we have seen, where Integration is a compensation and escape, or a balancing and re-inclusion of something left over.

There is always something left over, because reach always exceeds grasp, and each of our themes always leaves some residue. Thus, our attachment systems fail to deliver perfect satisfaction. Adaptations create some friction, and leave us at some risk. Love is not always requited. Play/Expression is constrained by the body's limitations, if by nothing else. Sociation leaves some ambitions unfulfilled, and fails to bring us the income or status we'd really like. There's always more on earth and in heaven than our philosophies can accommodate, and our worldviews leave us ignorant and uncertain of much that we'd like to understand. Finally, our efforts to compensate for life's shortcomings at best meet only partial success. Integration too leaves a residue of its own, and when it fails, our last recourse is gallows humor!

Elizabeth

The theme of integration will be difficult in anyone's biography as its content is mostly private by definition – concerned with what is left over that the public identity and its roles cannot satisfy. Elizabeth is certainly no exception. Though her life was closely watched and documented in every aspect, that very fact made her cautious about expressing her authentic feelings. Desires and impulses that enhanced her public persona could be given free rein. Those that would have weakened or contradicted her image had to be kept hidden. For that reason, we have little direct evidence of Elizabeth's *residue* – the aspects of herself left unsatisfied by

38 See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saturnalia> and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feast_of_fools

her very public identity and its roles. We know a lot about her diversions, her religious preferences, her overt activities in general; at her 'subversive' thoughts and feelings, the aspects of identity that she needed to compensate somehow, we mostly have to guess.

Our impression is that, on the whole, she loved being queen – the scope, the perks, the showmanship that went with the job. Her accession itself was certainly a personal comfort: So long as her sister reigned, it was not clear how long she would be allowed to live, or whether she would be forced to marry and sent abroad. With the crown, the threats did not cease, but they became much more remote; she at least had more control of her own fate. Abruptly, after her precarious youth, she found herself in the position for which she had been bred and educated. So it's scarcely surprising that she fell into her job with a passion, and mostly relished the roles that went with it. As would be true for anyone, this close fit between her public identity and her authentic self was part of the secret of her success.

But there were areas of friction – or rather, signs that it is natural to interpret in that fashion. I will mention three such areas where we get some glimpse of a private woman, not completely swallowed by her public role, and not completely fulfilled by its demands.

We can start with her famous virginity: Was she a literal virgin, or only a technical one? We just don't know how far her intimacies went, though given the stakes involved and how carefully she was watched, they probably stopped well short of consummation. It's clear that Elizabeth loved power more than she wanted marriage and children, but there are hints of womanly feelings nonetheless. She liked to have handsome, gallant men around her at court. Her affair (if we can call it that) with Robert Dudley has been described. We've seen the poem she wrote about the departure of Anjou, her last suitor. We know too that she was a superb dancer and horsewoman – well beyond the level that her role required. She loved to dance and ride and hunt and continued to do these things even in advanced years, when no one would have thought less of her for slowing down. We might guess that these physical activities were 'sublimations' – displacements of a thwarted sexuality. In any case, we can see them, along with her love of literature, music and the theatre, as diversions from her serious work load. Her lifelong physicality, and her intellectual and artistic pursuits display her as a woman of tremendous vitality, and with a residue to match.

Elizabeth's way with tough decisions suggests a second area of residue. On many occasions she drove her counsellors to despair with her temporizing and hesitation. Her long postponement of Mary Stuart's execution was the most famous instance, but there were many others. Faced with a tough decision, she often temporized: it was a part of her executive style.

Often perhaps, this temporizing may have been more strategic than temperamental. Elizabeth understood very well the advantages of keeping her options open. She understood the importance of maintaining 'credible deniability' in case a decision went badly, while taking credit when it went well. She understood the uses of time, and knew that problems ignored often went away of their own accord. Indeed her reign as a whole has been interpreted as an exercise in buying time – when time was precisely what was needed to deal with the situations – religious, strategic and economic – that she faced.

The queen could and would take a decision when she felt one was really needed. But on some occasions, the paralysis seems to have been temperamental. Elizabeth was quite capable of dithering, as well as strategic temporizing, and her advisors could not always tell the difference. Neither can historians. In the case of Mary Stuart both motives were probably important: Beheading Mary would also cut off Phillip II's hopes that England would fall into his hand eventually, and would be taken as a challenge to war. But keeping her alive despite her intriguing would be a confession of weakness, and would alienate Elizabeth's Protestant supporters who were fearful of a return to the old religion and, indeed, of Spanish influence in England. Both policies had large drawbacks, so there was every good reason to postpone the decision between them as long as possible, and to avoid personal blame for the decision as much as possible. But at the same time, Elizabeth probably knew that she would eventually have to sign a warrant for Mary's execution, but simply hated to do it! Her mother had died by the executioner's hand, and the judicial murder of queens was not a precedent she cared to set. There is evidence of real personal agony in Elizabeth's decision here. In general, for a monarch of that time, she was remarkably clement, and she commuted death sentences when she felt she could. She really didn't like to kill people!

Increasingly, in Elizabeth's old age we see a third area as well: a mixture of vanity and carelessness which hint that she was growing weary. In the year of the Armada, 1588, she had already reigned for 30 years. She was already 55, a respectable old age in those days, but she had 15 years left – and these, arguably, the most painful and frustrating of her reign. One by one, her old friends and counsellors were dying off: Robert Dudley in 1588; just a week after the Spanish rout; Walsingham in 1590; Cecil in 1598. Elizabeth herself, no longer the handsome woman that she had been, was aging. Especially, her teeth were rotting and must have been very painful, though she was reluctant to have them pulled. Dentistry and medicine were primitive in the 15th century – for a queen as for a commoner!

Then there was the Irish situation, an intractable mess as we saw in the last section. She sent Essex, her last favourite, to deal with it; and he not

only failed to do so, but disobeyed her explicit instructions in the process. Finally, he rebelled and she had to execute him. In doing so, she did not show the same reluctance as with her cousin Mary Stuart, but it cannot have been pleasant for her. They had been close once, and she was not a vengeful person.

All this took its toll. Finally, in March of 1603 when she was dying, she refused for days to lie down. When Robert Cecil, who had long since taken his father's place as chief secretary and advisor, told her that she must go to bed, she flashed back at him, saying "The word 'must' is not used to princes."

These features of Elizabeth's life strike me as phenomena of Integration: areas of residue that had to be compensated somehow. But these few remarks are about all we can say on this theme, and even this is mostly interpretive guesswork. What's clear enough is that the queen's reach, like anyone's, went well beyond her royal grasp and could not wholly succeed except in some imagined heaven. Even discounting for the advantages she was born with, she led a most impressive life. As well as a great queen, she was a highly 'self-actualized' individual. Yet, no more than any of us, could she be completely so. Like all lives, hers too was incomplete. Even as queen of England, she did not 'have it all.'

9. Worldview: The Reflective Self

The brain is not an organ of thinking but an organ of survival, like claws and fangs. It is made in such a way as to make us accept as truth that which is only advantage. It is an exceptional, almost pathological constitution one has, if one follows thoughts logically through, regardless of consequences. Such people make martyrs, apostles, or scientists, and mostly end on the stake, or in a chair, electric or academic.

Albert Szent-Gyorgi

The effort to understand the universe is one of the very few things that lifts human life a little above the level of farce and gives it some of the grace of tragedy.

Steven Weinberg

Many more people subscribe to the worldviews of the groups that they belong to than could be said to work out original worldviews of their own. Still, worldview must be considered a theme of individuation for at least two reasons: First, in any complex society, individuals will be exposed to outlooks and opinions different from those they grew up with. There may be significant differences within their family itself. Over the course of a lifetime, the number of such influences, and the combinatorial explosion of influences and choices may add up to a personal worldview as individual as a fingerprint in its details.

Second, there are people – all too few perhaps, but disproportionately significant nonetheless – who take the diversity of opinion, or a noticed discrepancy in received opinion from their own experience, as a challenge to think the matter through for themselves, trying to get it right. For such

persons, Worldview becomes a sharply individuating theme that may put them seriously at odds with their colleagues and neighbors. In his essay *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*, Thoreau wrote that "Any man more right than his neighbors constitutes a majority of one."³⁹ Erasmus wrote that "In the country of the blind the one eyed man is king." But H.G. Wells has a nasty little parable to the contrary. In his country of the blind, the one-eyed man is a lunatic and a fugitive.⁴⁰

We associate Worldview mostly with the second half of life, but in actuality, like all the other themes, it commences early. My five-year-old granddaughter already has a pretty clear sense of her local environment, how her attachment systems work, where she fits into them, and so forth. She has grasped already that there is a huge, complex and troubled world beyond the peaceful one she knows. Already, she has grasped something of that world's diversity – that things may not be the same for other children as they are for her. She understands that the world had a history – that things were not always as they are now. She knows very little of that history, but already draws a clear, correct and important distinction between '*these days*' and '*the olden times*.' She understands that even in her benevolent little world, accidents can happen. She knows about pain; she knows it is possible to get hurt.

She even gets a point that many grown-ups have trouble with: that there are many things that she *doesn't* know. She hears the adults talk around her, and knows that she sometimes understands them but often doesn't. She has discovered something she refused to know even a few months ago: that she still has a lot to learn. She has developed an intense curiosity about the world beyond her little circle. Just like other kids her age, she is ready now to start school, learn to read, get some introduction to other intellectual tools of the society she lives in, and to its public worldview, of which the personal worldview she forms will be a selection, an interpretation and perhaps, in certain respects, her own departure.

What Is a Worldview?

But we must ask: what is a worldview? The answer is far from obvious, because the public worldview of a whole society may be consensual in some respects and deeply conflicted in others. It may exist in several or many mutually hostile and contradictory versions. A selection of these will become sources of influence on the worldview of my granddaughter or any other particular individual.

Let's look at public worldview first. In Brussels, there is a organization called the Apostel Centre, aimed at the construction of an integrated

39 Available online at <http://www.constitution.org/civ/civildis.htm>

40 *In the Country of the Blind*, H.G. Wells. Available online at <http://www.online-literature.com/wellshg/3/>

worldview consistent with modern, scientific knowledge. Given the extent and fragmentation of human knowledge today, and the wide gap between the scientific consensus (incomplete though it is) and numerous popular (and mythical) worldviews, they see this task as difficult and urgent.

According to their booklet,⁴¹ the worldview they are developing will be a descriptive model, giving answers to at least the following questions:

- 1) What is the nature of our world? How is it structured and how does it function?
- 2) Why is our world the way it is, and not different? Why are we the way we are, and not different? What kind of global explanatory principles can we put forward?
- 3) Why do we feel the way we feel in this world, and how do we assess global reality, and the role of our species in it?
- 4) How are we to act and to create in this world? How, in what different ways, can we influence the world and transform it? What are the general principles by which we should organize our actions?
- 5) What future is open to us and our species in this world? By what criteria are we to select these possible futures?

The mind boggles . . .

For this essay's purpose, these questions are much too fancy, much too academic – better suited to a scientist or philosopher than to the ordinary individual. In my whole life, I've known very few people who could even begin to answer them in a fashion 'consistent with modern, scientific knowledge.' Yet everyone needs a worldview of sorts, to provide workable guidance in the management of day-to-day life; and everyone acquires a worldview somehow. It seems to me that Immanuel Kant came closer to the core of the human need for Worldview with his three great questions:⁴²

- What can I know?
- What should I do?
- What may I hope for?

For present purposes, I would alter and expand on Kant's questions, while adhering to his three categories. I would also put them in a different order, because our intentions (what we choose to do) normally follow from our beliefs and hopes. Our concern here is with certain features that anyone's worldview – yours or mine or my granddaughter's eventually – will surely come to include:

41 At www.vub.ac.be/CLEA/pub/books/worldviews.pdf p.13. See also the Apostel Centre's webpage at and the site of the Center Leo Apostel for Interdisciplinary Studies at www.vub.ac.be/CLEA/

42 In the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

First, in connection with knowledge, the child will develop and maintain some more-or-less accurate (but also more-or-less self-serving) biographical narrative about her family and upbringing. It will include some more-or-less accurate idea of how the social order works, and of her place within it. It will include some sense of who she is, of who has claims upon her, and of the extent to which she wants to honor those claims. It will have a more-or-less clear idea of what she loves – of *whom* she loves, in particular.

As well, her worldview will include some acquired attitudes and skills for learning, and some favored sources. There will be certain authorities to whom she turns for guidance – those of the scientific or seriously intellectual community (as I would prefer), or of some religious or political community. She will read some books and magazines and web sites but not others. She will have her own version of what *her* authorities are teaching.

According to her idea of the cosmos, and of society, and of her place in these, she will allow herself certain hopes but not others. As I see her now, she has a lot of confidence, and a rather high (and mostly justified) opinion of herself. Her family too has great hopes for her, and every intention of supporting her to the best of its ability in whatever hopes she sets for herself – whatever hopes she frames.

But, in connection with hope, we see that people desire, fear, value and more-or-less expect any number of different outcomes; and that some of these values are more conducive than others to a happy life. We see that for the sake of certain hopes, other hopes may be forbidden and renounced, as the hope for family and wealth is renounced by a Catholic nun or monk, or the hope for long life by a Japanese samurai. We can hope vicariously for others. We can hope imaginatively, e.g. for utopia or 'salvation,' or for a life beyond the grave. We can understand our hopes to be contingent in some way, on what we do, on what others do, and on impersonal events and happenstance.

Based on what my granddaughter desires and hopes for, and on what what she thinks she knows, her intentions will follow. She will make her plans and act on them – in a way that others can often foresee if they know her well enough.⁴³ She (and they) will think what can she do to increase the likelihood of getting what she hopes for, or of avoiding what she fears? Along these lines, she will form her plans, while others form theirs. The calculations are not always straightforward. Her beliefs and wishes may not dictate any clear course of action, or she may have a strategic interest in acting unpredictably to foil the conflicting intentions of an opponent. Or, her beliefs and desires may be so obscure or tangled that she herself may not be sure what they are.

Her ideas of morals, ethics and custom (whatever they are) will surely

43 See *The Intentional Stance*, Daniel Dennett (??)

factor in the choices she makes. She may feel constrained, or prevented in whatever way from doing, or going after, what she wants. Or, on the other hand, she may be encouraged or assisted in doing so. Overall, what she believes, what she desires, what she intends and plans, will together comprise what we are calling her worldview, and will guide her journey through life.

For any of us, what we see then is that worldview is not so much a matter of abstract belief and knowledge, as of orientation and existential strategy – an approach to life. In this, it subsumes all the other themes we've been discussing:

- a sense of personal context;
- a sense of one's own needs and desires, and of the means for their satisfaction;
- an awareness of skills one has acquired and the compromises one has made to cope with the world and get along in it.
- a sense of one's own values, desires and concerns;
- and so forth, for each of the themes that we've discussed . . .

Along with Kant, then, we can think of worldview first, as a mental map of society and then of the physical cosmos; second, as a set of guidelines for getting around and functioning in that cosmos; and third, as a system of wishes, fears and more-or-less likely expectations – personal expectations – of what may come to pass. Its beginnings are taken up more-or-less uncritically and automatically from significant others in an immediate family and social circle. Indeed, its roots are 'hard-wired' by evolution, as proclivities or 'instincts' of the organism. But worldview is refined, sometimes altered radically, by mature experience. As a personal mindset, and a more-or-less explicit and shared (or shareable) 'religion,' it is the achievement of a lifetime – which may or may not take current science into account.

However worthy the Apostel Centre's project – and I wish it every success – Worldview is not an academic exercise, but a theme of the individuation process.

The Reflective Self

In a sense, the theme of Worldview closes the circle of our discussion, insofar as a person's worldview can be seen as a reflection of her own life's context – a personal understanding of that context. As the newborn human creature develops into a person, she can be said to mirror or reflect the world around her. Or we could use the metaphor of a casting or molding process,⁴⁴ whereby some liquid material – e.g. of metal, or glass, or plastic – is poured into a pre-shaped hollow vessel and then allowed to

44 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casting>

solidify. Or we could use the metaphor of the photographic plate which is chemically altered by the pattern of light that falls on it to produce a negative image of that pattern. Or we could take Kafka's terrible metaphor⁴⁵ of the condemned man who is slowly put to death by having his sentence tattooed ever more deeply into his flesh, until the needles pierce his vitals. By whatever metaphor, the idea is the same: The life process tends eventually to shape an individual who reflects and may come to understand a little of the world that did the shaping.

All the themes we have been reviewing have a hand in this shaping process, which is deeply physical and practical, but also cognitive as well. Accordingly, the individual's understanding of her world can be said to evolve as a reflection of her life's experiences – in the dimensions we've been describing.

Post-modern thought has placed so much emphasis on interpretation as an act of power as to obscure the fact that understanding is an act of submission to the reality before one's nose. While it is true that we can have no reality apart from the one we actively construe, it is *not* true that we can safely construe just any which way we please. Beneath the cognized world of appearances (phenomena) there is a physical world of nourishment and opportunity and threat that must be dealt with and adapted to somehow. This 'hard' reality refuses to go away. It can be interpreted in various ways, but it must be dealt with somehow; and it is apt to bite painfully if it is interpreted wrongly.

With his book, *The Reflective Practitioner*, Donald Schön brought the concept of 'reflective practice' to American management theory in 1983. Yet the concept is an ancient one. Buddhists, in particular, have long taught the value of 'meditation,' defined simply as sitting down calmly in the midst of your current situation and letting it speak to you. Ordinary language quite commonly uses the word 'reflection' as a synonym for thought or meditation, as when we speak of a man 'reflecting' upon his situation, or on the 'suchness'⁴⁶ of life in general.

Other thinkers, notably Kant, Nietzsche and (most explicitly) Richard Rorty have insisted that the mind is not and can never be a 'clear mirror' of the reality before it. As Szent-Gyorgi says, its agenda is survival and advantage, rather than truth as such. The distinction between *noumenon* and *phenomenon*, between reality and appearance, between what is happening and what we think we are seeing, is worth keeping in mind. Yet the 'mirror' metaphor (and that of 'reflection') have their uses. As a species and as individuals, our senses, brains and nervous systems evolved to cope

45 In his short story *In the Penal Colony*, available on the Web at <http://records.viu.ca/~johnstoi/kafka/inthepenalcolony.htm>

46 Translated from *tathata*, a central Buddhist concept: a reflective openness to reality at the given moment.

with the life-worlds they inhabit. Within limits, and with significant reservations, they are remarkably good at this job because they had to be. Accordingly then, with its worldview, a mind can be said to 'reflect' that world, however imperfectly and with whatever distortions: it tries to make sense of its world for its own purposes in its own way, and thus is naturally imagined and spoken of as a kind of mirror. In conclusion, then, we can think of worldview as someone's personal reconstruction and imagination of her own life's context. Existence is recursive, self-creating in that way. In the most literal sense, we are what what we think we are, and what we are trying to become.

Elizabeth's Worldview

Elizabeth Tudor's worldview makes particularly interesting study for several reasons. First, because she was the queen of a country that was about to become important, her beliefs and values were remarkably influential; and they still figure strikingly in what we call modernity around the world today. Second, precisely because she was a political figure, rather than a professional theologian or scholar – just a highly intelligent and pragmatic layperson in the realm of ideas – her beliefs and values are indicative of the best that was available to the upper classes of her place and time. Nor were they *avant garde*, except to the extent that England as a whole was ahead of its time by comparison with the Continent: For her country at that time, she stands out intellectually only for her moderation and her political success. By and large, she held a worldview that fitted in with the society around her, especially as it could be shared with or sold to her people. The people who could not be induced to her remarkably sane perspective, their bitter resistance to her reign, show us something unfortunate about human nature.

Finally, Elizabeth lived in a passionate, transitional age, when Worldview was *literally* a burning matter – when people were torturing and killing, and themselves being tortured and killed, for their beliefs and values. In the England and Europe of her time, a feudal mindset was losing out to centralized regimes and to a rising nationalism. Roman Catholic religion was under pressure both from the Protestant Reformation and from the beginnings of modern science. In this time also, a whole lot of new technology was changing the way that people did things – and creating an expectation that further improvements would follow.⁴⁷ Elizabethan England saw the invention locally of bottled beer, the knitting machine and the flush toilet, along with numerous innovations from elsewhere. Before the Renaissance, people everywhere had expected to live more or less as their parents and grandparents had lived. By Elizabeth's time, with gathering momentum, people were coming to expect

47 See <http://www.elizabethan-era.org.uk/elizabethan-inventions.htm>

change, and either fear it or dream of progress.

Elizabeth lived in the middle of all this, and came to terms with it in her own way: Though she certainly believed in God, and in her own God-given authority and accountability, she had little respect for prelates and churches. Though she saw herself as an absolute monarch, and staunchly asserted and defended her prerogatives as such, she understood that her rule was dependent on the consent of her people as expressed through her Council, through the landed magnates and nobles, and through Parliament. She took great care to build consensus, and to work *with* the power-centers of her world – against them as seldom and as delicately as possible. Her speeches are masterpieces of rhetoric, at the level of a Winston Churchill. As well as queen, she was a great politician.

She knew that her country was still relatively small and weak as compared with the great powers of Europe – notably France and Spain; she knew that the Catholic Church in Rome was powerful and dangerous to her – at odds with her own nationalism and that of her people, though many of these people were also ardent Catholics, uncertain of their first loyalties. She knew that the world was a big place, and that although Spain, Portugal and Holland already claimed a lot of it, there was still much to explore and exploit. Though the Italian Giovanni Caboto (aka John Cabot) had sailed for Henry VII two generations earlier, little had come of his three voyages beyond some awareness of North America. Under Elizabeth, the English entered more seriously into the game of exploration, preparing the way for colonial settlements there under her Stuart successors. In 1580, Francis Drake completed the second circumnavigation of the Earth, after Magellan's almost 60 years before. In the 1580's, under a charter from Elizabeth, Walter Raleigh attempted to found a colony on Roanoke Island, off the coast of what Raleigh named (and is still called) 'Virginia'. Drake, Raleigh and other privateers raided throughout the Spanish Main, and challenged, and eventually broke, Spain's naval power. Elizabeth was preoccupied mostly with her resistance to Spanish power, but she certainly understood the New World's importance as a theatre of competition.

Fundamentally, Elizabeth was a rationalist, well aware of a science (still immature) that had already scored some impressive achievements. Her employment of men like John Dee⁴⁸ and Francis Bacon⁴⁹ tell much about the quality and temper of her mind. Her rationalism had the limits of its time, however; like John Dee, her science advisor, she still believed in astrology.

What of her 'values'? Believing (correctly) that her world, though privileged and opulent, was a very dangerous place, Elizabeth was almost

48 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Dee

49 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Bacon

obsessively cautious; hating to do or commit herself to anything irrevocable. Believing that knowledge was power, she loved learning and valued it in herself and in others – was studious as young princess and diligently well-informed as a queen. She surrounded herself with intelligent hard-working councillors, and allowed them, in fact commanded that they speak their minds frankly to help her make up her own. She did not want yes-men. She demanded loyalty and obedience from her advisors, but did not require their agreement either with her or with each other. She could punish treason ruthlessly when she had to, but never resented or punished people for disagreeing with her. Valuing both power and clear thinking, she also valued good writing, and was herself a master of rhetoric as we've seen.⁵⁰

Knowing the value of money, Elizabeth was thrifty almost to a fault, hating to spend unnecessarily, skimping dangerously on her defense budget, and personally checking the realm's accounts. Not the least of her achievements was to balance her kingdom's books, bring down its debt and restore its credit. At the same time, she was fully capable of enjoying the luxury and perks of her position; and she understood the political value of mounting a good show, and holding her subject's attention. It was an aspect of her job, but one she seemed to love. Throughout her long reign, she was a great and tasteful patron of the arts.⁵¹ Using her gender skillfully for this purpose, she held herself at the centre of a court that is still renowned for its brilliance in an era of brilliant courts.

She understood and valued *noblesse oblige* – her role and its obligations. "Mere English" as she liked to call herself, she understood and shared her people's rising nationalism. It was good politics, as she well knew, but it came naturally to her.

In an age notorious for its fanatics and inquisitions, Elizabeth was clement and tolerant – having learned by observation from the mistakes of her father and her sister Mary, but partly by temperament also. Not always successfully, she drew a distinction that was remarkable for its time, between liberty of conscience and obedience to the laws regulating religious practice. Upholding her right to regulate those practices under the terms of settlement at the Peace of Augsburg⁵² – "*Cuius regio, eius religio*" ("Whose realm, his religion") – she nonetheless set a limit to her prerogatives in that regard. People could believe what they pleased so long as they practiced what the law required. In her own great phrase, she had no desire "to make windows into people's souls."

Her era produced several other female rulers – Mary Tudor, her older

50 <http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/elizabib.htm> and <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/elizabeth1.asp>

51 <http://www.erasofelegance.com/history/elizabethanarts.html>

52 Meaning that the religion of the ruler dictated the religion of the ruled.

sister, Mary Stuart her Scottish enemy, Catherine de Medici of France – all political failures by comparison. Elizabeth understood men, and knew how to play with them and use them. She enjoyed doing so. She dangled herself as bait for as long she could; and by the time she was no longer nubile, she was already an archetype – a face of the Mother Goddess, like the Virgin Mary herself. In her own words, "I keep the good will of all my husbands — my good people — for if they did not rest assured of some special love towards them, they would not readily yield me such good obedience." But, though she clearly liked gallant males and enjoyed male company, she also set high value on her independence. As a teenaged girl under the prior reigns of both Mary and Edward, steps were taken to marry her off to a safe husband, but she was already resistant to the idea of matrimony. Certainly her father had set no shining example of marital bliss. But it would be interesting to know when and how the idea of political virginity – making political use of that 'Virgin Queen' image – first occurred to her. In any case, she cared little about continuing the Tudor dynasty.

Elizabeth knew the value of self-control – when to keep her temper and when to lose it. She could be flexible too, able to bend to the requirements of a situation, whether they pleased her or not. She loved to keep her options open, and valued time for its own sake. She believed that most threats and difficulties would resolve themselves in due course, or just go away of their own accord. On most key issues of her reign that approach worked well, though some came back to torment her Stuart successors.

Though serious and hardworking, Elizabeth also liked her fun. Court life offered numerous pleasures and amusements, and the queen participated in all of them, though it is sometimes difficult to say which just went with her role and which she really cared for. Nor is it even clear that the distinction makes sense in her case, because she clearly enjoyed the role itself, and the court life that went with it. But it is certain that she loved to ride and hunt; and she continued to do so long past the age when such exertions were expected of her. She was known too for a deep sense of humor. She had a ready wit that could be biting, playful or kindly as suited her purpose.

The paradox of Elizabeth Tudor is that through her deep conservatism, she became an agent of change. In her reign, the role and confidence of Parliament greatly expanded, avoiding civil war at the time but leading to the execution of Charles I, two generations later.

Challenging (ultimately defying) the power of Spain, investing in voyages of commerce and discovery, she prepared the way for a wholly new style of imperialism and colonization. Though she surely did not believe in freedom of religion in the modern sense, she mostly tolerated it and paved the way for the separation of church and state – a cornerstone of

secular society and modern governance. She gathered learning and intelligence around her court, and took a long step toward modernity by deploying the best available knowledge as an instrument of state.

Disliking war as risky, expensive and irrational, she avoided it as best she could, helping the values and attitudes of what Jane Jacobs called the 'Commercial Syndrome' to flourish in her country, at the expense of the 'Guardian Syndrome' traditional to its landed aristocracy.⁵³ In doing so, she encouraged England's nobility to go heavily into industry and trade – in this way too becoming one of the founders of our modern world. It was partly due to her encouragement of trade that Napoleon, two hundred years later could gibe at the British as "a nation of shopkeepers," but in the end her policies were vindicated, while his own were thwarted.

In sum, Elizabeth Tudor was certainly a great prince, but she was also a strikingly individuated human being who, nonetheless, like all of us, reflected and was moved by the issues of her place and time, having to choose her side, play her hand, and be constrained by its horizons and implications. She illustrates both the possibilities and the limitations of human individuality remarkably well.

10. Review and Overview

We return to Kant's point about the unsocial sociability of Man, noted at the beginning of this essay. The question that puzzled him – that puzzles us all – is this: How can human individuality be so richly diverse but also so effectively constrained and limited as we know it to be? How is it possible for human animals as uniquely individual as we are to construct and live in such vast, complex societies? Or, turning the question around, how is it possible for a primate creature that evolved for group living and collective mindset to remain as diverse and troublesomely individual as we are, and as creatively individual as we can be? As Nietzsche and Emerson suggest, it is just possible but, alas, very difficult for the individual to keep from being overwhelmed by the tribe. But it remains possible and, at least to some of us, highly desirable.

About any particular individual, what we want to understand are the features and the development of his or her *identity*: the interface between that unique Self and its ambient society. As Freud saw in one his most famous essays, *Civilization and its Discontents*,⁵⁴ there cannot help but be tensions at that interface. The society offers its culture and network of support, more or less stingily or generously, but on condition that its

53 See <http://www.firstthings.com/article/2008/11/003-traiders-and-raiders-45> and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Systems_of_Survival

54 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civilization_and_Its_Discontents and its full text at <http://lightoftheimagination.com/Freud-Civil-Disc.pdf>.

specifications and demands are met. The individual enjoys society's support and cultural facilities but chafes at its demands, meeting its specifications only imperfectly and with difficulty. A personal identity evolves to manage the resulting tensions for some particular human animal, socially situated as it is, over the course of its lifetime.

Where methodological individualism takes individuality for granted and seeks to explain why self-interested persons will form and cooperate in groups, the approach taken here was just the opposite: We preferred to assume that species membership and membership in a social group have precedence over individuality, and that our primate species evolved for social existence in smallish family bands which have been jostling and knitting together into larger groupings ever since. We assume that human creatures are 'always already' members and participants in such groups well before we become significantly individual. We assume that group membership and participation can pose difficult problems for the individual, and that our identities develop to solve or manage these problems. In a nutshell, then, we propose to complement methodological individualism with a '*methodological tribalism*' (as we might call it) that takes the group and its collective mindset (its '*culture*') as primary. From this perspective, not group cooperation but significant individuality is what needs to be explained.

Two questions are thus raised:

- First, ultrasocial primates that we are, why has evolution left to us as much individuality as it has? And second,
- in the course of a human life span, how do we become as individual as we manage to be?

To the first of these questions – why has evolution left to us so much individuality? – one possible answer is that there has not been sufficient time for it to drive our sociality further. It may be that if our species does not destroy itself first, we will in time become as much components of a single hive mind as the Borg in *Star Trek*.⁵⁵ An alternative answer, which I think more likely, is that a modicum of individuality offers certain advantages that have kept, and will probably continue to keep human evolution from the Borg extreme. The chief advantage of our "unsocial sociability" – possibly a decisive advantage – would be more rapid and versatile cultural adaptability. Just as genetic mutation rates seem to be adjusted by natural selection in the interests of biological adaptability,⁵⁶ so the rate and range of personal idiosyncrasy and deviance may be adjusted – both by genetic and cultural evolution – in the interests of cultural adaptability. Given sufficient time, we might become somewhat less individualistic, somewhat more spontaneously cooperative than we are at

55 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borg_%28Star_Trek%29

56 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutation_rate#Evolution

present, but may remain significantly individual, even so. On the other hand, human evolution is fast becoming a question of human technology and politics; and there is no knowing where it will go.

At our present level, individuality is furthered by several factors that limit group participation: Human empathy – affect sharing – though significant, is very limited. Both genetically and culturally, there is surely room for enhancement. The relatively low bandwidth of human speech limits the effectiveness of human communication – which, in turn, sets limits to the detail and nuance of interpersonal sharing. Problems in amicably distributing the benefits of collaboration to all collaborators limit the types and scope of collaboration that are feasible. In consequence of these factors, the preoccupation of each group member with his own affairs and interests sets fairly stringent limits on any group's solidarity, effectiveness and intimacy.

About the second question – how do we become as individual as we are? – there is much more to say. Each of our themes can be seen both to constrain individuality and to require it. Each can be seen to shape and limit the individuation process, even in driving it along.

Straight off, we can see that human individuality is both enabled and constrained by the brute facticity of existence itself – which always precedes essence as the existentialists insisted. We are born and live out our lives within a certain context with at least three aspects, as we have seen: At the biological level, we are prompted to curiosity about the individual's genetic heritage, already both generically human and individually unique at the moment of conception when a particular sperm cell gets taken up by the ovum. At the geographic and historical level, we are prompted to inquire into the physical and cultural conditions of this particular life, which will have much in common with other individuals conceived and born into the same milieu. At the personal level, we are prompted to ask about this individual's parents and family, and about his or her place within that family. For the children of a certain family, at least some of the issues are likely to be similar, though their handling of those family issues may be very different. We surely wonder how much has been 'written' for the individual life, when these factors are fully known.⁵⁷

In our basic needs – for air, water and food – human beings everywhere are much the same; and the need for food has always pulled humans together, getting us to produce it more efficiently through collaboration in groups. Our biological needs, then, especially for food, have been a homogenizing influence, discouraging individuation and binding groups together. Tastes and desires, by contrast, vary with temperament and culture, and may be as diverse – even weird – as circumstances permit. We could say real need is a centripetal force for

57 For example, see <http://researchnews.osu.edu/archive/identwin.htm> and <http://learn.genetics.utah.edu/content/epigenetics/twins/>

social life, where desire is personal and centrifugal. Context likewise may draw people together or pull them apart, and we can observe a similar *Yin-Yang* pattern with all the other themes. As the ancient Chinese believed, comfortable social life requires that the Yin and Yang – that which draws together and that which flies apart – be in some kind of balance.⁵⁸

St. Francis said, "I need little, and that little I need very little." In his whole way of life, Diogenes the Cynic had said much the same thing. Both men, in their different ways raised what must be the key question about attachment, certainly for our own consumerist society: How do desires become addictive and turn into needs? When does an attachment system cease to supply real needs and worthwhile desires, and become instead an obstacle or a distraction?

As with Attachment, the theme of Adaptation likewise manages to be both centripetal and centrifugal – a force for conformity and for individuation at the same time. On one hand, all the people in a given situation – in a lifeboat, for example – will have to adapt and conform to the objective requirements of that situation. There will be pressure for them to cooperate, yet they will do so in varied and idiosyncratic ways as their temperaments, life histories and mindsets suggest.

In general, adaptations are both costly and risky, as there is usually some trial-and-error involved. Other things being equal, we usually prefer to do things as we have always done, rather than change our ways. But for certain individuals, things will *not* be equal. These may feel an incentive to change what most others (and least for now) prefer to leave the same.

Love makes the world go round and, in doing so, it too is both centripetal and centrifugal – causing people to be much alike, but also different from one another. The situations, qualities, things and people that we love or dislove are patterned by human biology through the pleasure-pain and affect systems. To that extent, human beings everywhere want much the same things. But tastes vary by temperament, life history and personal mindset – and, in that way, our varied loves and disloves pull us in different directions. As any young child shows his parents, some tastes we are born with, but others are acquired. And even the cravings we are born with – a 'sweet tooth,' for example – drive some children much more than others, and may be satisfied in different ways.

Though we begin to know quite a lot about the physiological origins of the different types of love, we still know little about the linking of Love to Attachment. How does love attach itself to particular persons and objects? What intangible satisfactions does an individual love and pursue? Given the costs involved, why do most adult humans (women especially) want to have children – and love them so much after they have had them? Such questions have no answers yet, but they are puzzles rather than mysteries

58 For a compact introduction to this theory, see http://www.byregion.net/cgi-bin/users/articles_viewer.pl?action=show&username=bramblehillshaman&member_type=&id=2288

now because we at least have ways to study them.

Play/Expression is socialized by the difficulty of finding playmates and attracting an audience; but is pre-eminently creative, idiosyncratic and individuating – probably the most so of all our themes. As a realm of nearly perfect freedom it offers more scope for individuality than any of our other themes; yet even Play/Expression is constrained by the properties and qualities of its materials and media, and can be judged by the ingenuity of the use it makes of these. This explains why a relatively leisured class, enjoying great freedom but still observant of its society's reality, has been worth its keep – a source of competitive advantage for the population as a whole. With too much freedom, the leisured class is apt to become a class of parasites; but without such a class, society gets into a rut and stays there. Here again, there is an optimum of balance, far superior to the extremes on either side.

By contrast with Play/Expression, Sociation must be the least free of our themes – apart from Context, which the individual encounters as a given. Desirable roles are scarce relative to the candidates who would take them. They must be won in competition and remain demanding after they've been won. Desirable identities do not come cheaply. Most have to be earned and paid for with effort, self-discipline, courage and thought. Yet this theme too is Janus-faced – looking in both directions toward greater collaboration and social constraint, but also toward greater personal choice from the roles and experiences on offer. In a complex society like our own, that diversity is enormous.

The theme of Integration also makes for a degree of convergence, as the genres and means available for its pursuit – e.g. religions, sports, art-forms, recreational drugs and sex – are limited. Each of these will have its devotees, but there are only so many. At the same time, people will find themselves pulled apart by their choices and by their playful and expressive use of means. It is a truism that the beginning students of any art form are much alike, but conspicuously different after a dozen years of practice. Working in the same forms, with the same techniques and the same exemplary masters, makes the apprentices much more individual, not less so. This is a paradox if you like, but every teacher has seen it.

Finally, Worldview, our last theme, prompts simultaneously toward social conformism and toward distinctive individuality. Experiences are private. Interpretations are personal, as post-modern thinkers have insisted. Where a man stands depends on where he sits – but always and only on his own ass! Yet we construct our personal worldviews, just as we acquire language, from the linguistic and cognitive materials around us; and, as it costs effort and may be dangerous to go against the views of those around us, we have a tendency to follow the crowd in our ways of perceiving and thinking. We are suggestible creatures, we "go along to get along," and we are taught early (and for good reasons!) to question our

own perceptions and judgment against the wisdom of others. Yet it takes a child or the village fool to see that the Emperor is naked!

In sum then, we must repeat that the concept of role does not come near to covering what individuals draw from their groups and societies. The eight themes that we've reviewed here tell that story somewhat more justly. We are not born equal by any means, but we are born facing common issues that we reckon with and manage in our individual ways. We are not 'free' in the old metaphysical sense: we are surely not pure, unconstrained spirits. But we must be considered autonomous in a pragmatic sense: We respond autonomously to the suggestions we receive – accepting some, declining others, and recombining the lot of them in some uniquely individual way. No one does that for us. To that extent, we can be justly credited with, and held responsible for the choices we make and for our actions.

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Genetically, anatomically, physiologically and cognitively, each human individual is very similar to every other. It has been known for a few decades now that a normal human brain is configured with functionally specialized modules, each evolved to process a specific type of problem in a fairly standardized way.⁵⁹ We are neither 'blank slates' nor general information processors – more like 'inner committees' representing interdependent and often cooperative, but potentially competing concerns and abilities. Though extraordinarily versatile and adaptable compared with other animals, we tend to think and act in characteristically human ways. In 1991, the anthropologist Donald Brown published a book called *Human Universals*, listing several hundred features that all human cultures seem to share.⁶⁰ There is indeed such a thing as 'human nature,' and its constraints are by no means trivial.

Ironically perhaps, one thing that this thematic approach would stress is that the commonalities between human lives and cultures are not genetic effects exclusively: The broad issues and problems of a human life are also much the same for everyone. This is hardly news, but it is worth some emphasis and further study. As Daniel Dennett remarks somewhere, hunters everywhere throw their spears pointy end first, presumably without a gene instructing them to do so. For similar reasons, human beings with similar attachment needs will tend to develop similar attachment systems, and some similar adaptations too, under similar conditions. And so forth. If the themes identified here are indeed common features of our humanity, then it is only to be expected that cultural

59 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modularity_of_mind and <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/modularity-mind/>

60 See <http://condor.depaul.edu/mfiddler/hyphen/humunivers.htm>

similarities will evolve and persist, beneath whatever variation. Thus, body adornment, magic, medicine, music, and other items on Brown's and Pinker's list⁶¹ need not arise from genetic effects exclusively or even mainly (though they would have to be genetically enabled to some extent). They would arise too from universal human motifs or themes with their associated values, issues and problems.

Recognizing our eight themes (or whatever others) as human universals, the questions posed above become more accessible both to ordinary discourse and to research. Individuality *per se* becomes more intelligible to the extent that personal values, idiosyncracies and deviancies need no longer be dismissed as irrational. We need no longer shrug that "There is no accounting for tastes!" We can, on the contrary, begin to account for personal tastes as a playing out of themes that are not individual at all, but stable features of the human condition. I have suggested how this might be done in the case of Elizabeth Tudor. One could attempt the same with Socrates, Augustine, Savonarola, Caravaggio, Rousseau, Freud, Lenin or any other of history's more colorful characters whose identities take some explaining – who departed from the social norms of their life-worlds in significant respects. You can try out these themes on that specific identity that you encounter in a mirror. They are a way of asking, "How did you become who you are?"

Accordingly, this thematic perspective finds a natural application in the fields of psychotherapy, and self-help. Alone, or with a therapist's assistance, you can talk or write about the roots of your own life in systematic fashion by considering each of these themes in turn – As I have done here with Elizabeth Tudor. About Context, you would simply try to understand as much of it as you can. For Love, the source of our values and clearly upstream of the other themes, you would try to get clear on what you really care about, and with what priorities. For the six remaining themes, you would try to describe just how you handle each one, how you came to do so, and what (if anything) prevents you from making improvements. For example, you might attempt to prune and simplify your attachment system; buttress and strengthen your adaptations, or render them gentler and more flexible; find more satisfying modes of play and expression; revise your sociation to better accord with your priorities; deepen your integration and your worldview. And make what other changes seem desirable and appropriate.

Consciousness-raising is necessarily an exercise in lifting yourself by your own bootstraps. But then, so is individuation as such.

61 Ibid.