



Hamlet, Anybody?

I know who you are, John Smith of Littleton. I googled you. I know that you are 45, married to Marian; that you have three sons, Tom, Dick and Harry. You're a farmer and quite an accomplished amateur actor, currently starring as Hamlet, which will run for a week in your town. I hope you are enjoying the performances. According to the Littleton Gazette, they're enjoying you!

But I'm sure that when the curtain falls at the end of Act V, scene II each night and you doff your costume and re-engage with your extra-thespian life, you desist from Thee-ing and Thou-ing your family and settle in to being a father and a farmer again.

In past seasons, you've starred in *Macbeth*, *Death of a Salesman* and *Waiting for Godot*. All were roles; you donned the costumes; you performed; the final curtain fell; you got into your street clothes; and you went back to being John Smith.

But I have upsetting news for you, John Smith: you're not really John Smith at all. John Smith is merely another role, albeit it a meta-role, that you play. Remember when you say to your friend in Hamlet Act I, scene V, "*There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.*"? I'm sure you were pushing him out of his cosmological comfort zone. I'm going to push you a little, too. John Smith, farmer and father of three is just another role you play; as was Hamlet, Macbeth, Willy Loman or Vladimir.

Extrapolate, "John Smith." Over many lifetimes you'll star in many different spacesuits. You won't always be John Smith. Once you starred as Jane Doe; maybe next time you'll star as Audrey Offenbach. In actual fact you never *were* John Smith; you're only playing a role as John Smith now, in this current lifetime.

Remember the day village vandals broke in, before the performance, and spray-painted the set? Immediately, you stepped into a bigger role as protector of the facility and repairer of the theatre flats, before you got on with being Hamlet again when the curtain rose at 8PM.

“John Smith” is an alias. You’re a spirit in a spacesuit, you’re a soul on safari on planet Earth, you’re a bite-sized piece of God who volunteered for incarnation - again and again. A great Jewish carpenter-avatar once said, *“You must be compassionate as your heavenly father is compassionate.”* He was speaking in Aramaic and the word that gets translated as “father” is much more accurately translated as “birthing principle of the cosmos.” And the Aramaic word for compassion, Rahamim, is the plural of the Aramaic word for a *womb*. So what he really said was, *“you must be womblike as the birthing principle of the cosmos is a womb.”* How can you be womblike, “John Smith”? By birthing yourself over and over again until you’re fully satisfied with the final product.

You’ve already come a long way. At your first attempt, you fashioned a zygote that became an embryo and then a fetus, fully convinced of its own omnipotence as it steered the mother-child organism into blissfully granting its every wish. But then you birthed a nightmare: the walls of your intra-uterine paradise began to close in upon you in a series of violent contractions, while the escape door was still locked tight. When it finally did open, there followed a period of scary spelunking, ending with the glare of lights and the freezing cold of the extra-uterine world. Now you would have to try to manipulate the mother-child organism from a remote control tower inside a little nine pounds corpus. That was the second birth.

And then came, perhaps, the scariest self-birthing of them all: you realized after several months that there really wasn’t a single mother-child organism of which you were the driver. The sheer horror of the realization, that the mother part was separate from you and that she held all of the power, was so traumatic as to set up a psychic split within you. You developed an Ego to make sense and take control of the little part of the organism that *was* you. You now used your lungs and your tantrums to force mother into a subservient role. Sometimes you succeeded and mostly you probably didn’t

Then you birthed an ambassador for the ego, called, a persona. Its role was to promote your interests by showing only (and greatly exaggerating) your gifts and loveliness, and doing damage control if you got any bad press. But the persona demands a very high psychic salary and drains lots of energy from the needier parts. Life frequently punctures this glorified self-image, unless

you become famous enough to draw a retinue of sycophants into your life who convince you that you *are* your persona. Movie stars, great ball players and successful politicians often suffer from this self-misidentification. And when two such narcissists meet or, heaven forbid, marry, then it's fireworks as each one wants to be the sun around whom the other is meant to orbit.

Keep birthing, John Smith. You're a father; you probably love your kids more than you love yourself and would be prepared to lay down your life for them. Good work! When you're ready to lay down your life for your enemy, then you really know that you're good at this birthing business. But you're not done birthing until you've brought forth Source. Once you give birth to God you can go on the pill.

After each birth, you see greater and greater beauty, grander and grander possibilities. But after each birth, the possible pathologies also increase. The village vandals who once spray-painted the theatre flats are now plying their trade globally, often while they wear tuxedos at important international events. They are the corporate royalty, media moguls and the best-politicians-money-can-buy, with a colorful sprinkling of religious dignitaries, fervently committed to sectarian salvation. Once the light gets brighter, the shadows get darker.

So now, John Smith, extrapolate. How many lifetimes do you want to spend believing only in Samsara? Your serial birthing has alerted you to different levels of the drama. If A equals conception, and B equals a body, and C equals an ego, and D equals a persona, and E equals compassion for others - are you going to have to work yourself laboriously through the entire alphabet over countless lifetimes in order to reach enlightenment? Or, now that you have identified the pattern, can you extrapolate and go straight to Z from E? Waking up can actually be EZ.

What if you were to recognize that reality, this concatenation of concentric levels of life, is simply a game of hide-and-go-seek that God plays with Herself? When you finally get it and grab God by the shoulder, you realize that it's your own shoulder you're grabbing. But the you who grabbed and got grabbed is not the little narcissistic, egoic skin-encapsulated self. And it's not even the compassionate, forgiving father of Tom, Dick and Harry self. It is, in fact, Source, from whom all manifestations, even the vandals who are torturing our planet, have arisen.

When you realize this, you don't have to trudge through F, G, H... Then you are truly liberated. Now you can throw back your head and laugh; a great, big belly laugh; the laugh, not of cynicism nor of superiority, but of admiration and awe at the power of the illusion-just-pierced.

And then you are free to fully celebrate and participate in *this* incarnation. Now you can be the best Hamlet possible, “John Smith.”

May God continue to hold you tenderly in the hollow of Her hand.

Namasté,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Seán". The signature is written in black ink and is centered on the page.

Tír na nÓg
September 2011