

THE MYSTERIES OF CREATIVITY

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The Phenomenon of Ritchie Blackmore: Musical Creativity as an Absolute Form of Realizing Childhood Vitality

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Abstract. The article analyzes the unique cultural and psychological phenomenon of the 1960s–70s — the heyday of hard rock, characterized by a richness of styles and a high level of performance mastery. A special focus is made on Richard Hugh Blackmore, who stands out among the numerous musicians of that time due to his distinctive personality and creative achievements. The implementation of a multidisciplinary approach in the biographical method of studying personality and creativity can be understood through the lens of Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory, particularly his concept of life stages development and the conflict of vitality. Erikson identifies eight stages, each involving a contradiction between the internal need for self-realization and external constraints, thus looking into the grounds of forming and realizing creative potential. An important prerequisite for the development of uniqueness and creativity is innate individuality embedded at the genetic level, called childhood vitality — the inner force that determines personality development throughout life. In the case of Blackmore and other talented musicians of this era, the manifestation of a high level of mastery and innovation is associated with an internal readiness to overcome stages of conflict and realize their unique natural ability. Research, analysis, and understanding of the psychological mechanisms of development and inner vitality are important for explaining differences in creative potential and achievements.

Keywords: multidisciplinary paradigm, innovations in music, creativity, epigenetic developmental map, childhood vitality, musical thinking, personal uniqueness, biographical method, Richard Blackmore

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Феномен Ричи Блэкмора – музыкальное творчество как доведенная до абсолюта форма реализации детской витальности

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Резюме. Статья посвящена анализу уникального культурного и психологического феномена 1960–70-х годов — эпохи расцвета хард-рока, характеризующейся богатством стилей и высоким уровнем исполнительского мастерства. В центре внимания находится фигура Ричарда Хью Блэкмора (Richard Hugh "Ritchie" Blackmore), который выделяется среди многочисленных музыкантов того времени своей особой личностью и творческими достижениями. Реализация полидисциплинарного подхода в биографическом методе исследования личности и творчества можно понять через призму психосоциальной теории Эрика Эриксона, особенно его концепции стадий жизненного развития и конфликта витальности. Эриксон выделяет восемь этапов, каждый из которых включает противоречие между внутренней потребностью в самореализации и внешними ограничениями, что особенно важно в контексте формирования и реализации творческого потенциала. Важной предпосылкой для развития уникальности и креативности является врожденная индивидуальность, заложенная на генетическом уровне, которую Эриксон называл детской витальностью — внутренней силой, определяющей развитие личности на протяжении всей жизни. В случае Блэкмора и других талантливых музыкантов этой эпохи, проявление высокого уровня мастерства и инноваций связано с внутренней готовностью преодолевать стадии конфликта и реализовывать свою уникальную природную способность. Исследование, анализ и понимание психологических механизмов развития и внутренней витальности важно для объяснения различий в творческом потенциале и достижениях.

Ключевые слова: полидисциплинарная парадигма, инновации в музыке, творчество, эпигенетическая карта развития, детская витальность, музыкальное мышление, личностная уникальность, биографический метод, Ричард Блэкмор

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Introduction

The musical culture of the late 1960s and 1970s is of particular interest as a unique psychological phenomenon. Within the most popular direction of this period, usually called hard rock — a direction that

was very diverse, covering a huge range of works from the most complex polyphonic compositions of Emerson, Lake & Palmer to the popular hits of Queen — an anomalously large number of authors and performers with a tremendous influence

on entire generations emerged. Within this genre, which essentially had no strict boundaries, one can find plenty of examples of mediocrity, outright opportunism, and "honest" creative failures, but in its best manifestations, this period represents a phenomenal integration of the highest performance mastery and compositional innovations into conventionally "youth" music. Moreover, "different performances of the same composition may vary in terms of performance parameters such as timing or dynamics, and these variations may have a major impact on how a listener perceives the music" (Lerch et al., 2020, 221). The only common criterion for including individual works or a musician's oeuvre in popular music can be attributed as the pleasure listeners derive from listening (Schubert, 2013).

Against this colorful background, the figure in black stands apart — the figure of Richard Hugh "Ritchie" Blackmore (Bloom, 2008) — an amazing musician and personality. "Amazing" in this case is neither a compliment nor a biased fan assessment of his talent. There is indeed much that is amazing in the life and work of Ritchie Blackmore, as well as in the public perception of him.

In various rock encyclopedias, wikipedias, and other similar sources, Blackmore is invariably characterized as "one of the most significant and influential guitarists of the twentieth century"². In the 1970s, the unofficial title of "king of the guitar" was firmly attached to him. At the

same time, the king of the guitar, certainly included in all sorts of lists of the best and greatest guitarists, as a rule occupies far from top positions in them (for example, according to Rolling Stone magazine, he is only 55th). Let us not look into the grounds of these lists; let us simply note the fact. Blackmore also does not appear in the lists of the well-paid and richest musicians. At the same time, by the age of 30, he had secured financial independence that allowed him to play what he wanted, write what he wanted, and maintain a lifestyle that met his rather expensive demands and tastes.

As early as the beginning of the 1970s, a popular image of Ritchie Blackmore was formed as a gloomy, unsociable and at the same time scandalous genius — almost a sociopath. Meanwhile, unlike many of his colleagues, Blackmore was not involved in any really major scandals. He loved to drink all his life (and never hid it), but did not arrange orgies that made the front pages of tabloids, never used drugs; the drama of his legendary feud with Ian Gillan is greatly exaggerated. Behind the only truly major episode in his career, involving the smashing of guitars and the destruction of stage equipment at the California Jam in 1974, widely circulated thanks to surviving video footage, was a complex set of motives that included completely rational considerations of a commercial nature. Moreover, Ritchie Blackmore can be called an exemplary family man — his official marriage to Candice Night, resulted in the birth of two

² Ричи Блэкмор – Интервью в прямом эфире. URL: <https://youtu.be/5PRE4UqT2HE?is=NyiS-hTcjPTP9xFF> (accessed: 05.04.2025).

children and an unusually fruitful creative collaboration, has lasted 18 years, and their cohabitation is much longer (they became engaged back in 1994). Prior to this, the "unsociable" Blackmore had been officially married three times – all these marriages were short-lived, apparently largely fleeting infatuations, but, note, the "scandalous" and "self-absorbed" rock idol preferred to formalize relationships. The same "unsociable", "scandalous", "withdrawn" Blackmore, who constantly cursed music producers in public declarations throughout his career, was perfectly able to deal with them, invariably achieving satisfaction of his financial and organizational demands, as well as his musical preferences.

And here we come to the main point. Not only as a completely unique, inimitable performer, but also as an extremely talented and prolific composer, Ritchie Blackmore not only elevated popular music to the level of high art, but also made a fully academic contribution to the development of musical culture as a whole.

The Transformation of Musical Language in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century

1. In the second half of the twentieth century, music saw the coexistence of three directions in the development of musical language – the modal-tonal system with "classical" musical forms continued to function, the search for new means of musical expression, new logic of their interaction, and new "avant-garde" forms continued, while at the same time an appeal began to actively

manifest itself (both in the form of quotations and in the form of using individual techniques, stylization of styles, and an appeal to the forms of structures and logic of musical language of past eras and distant cultures) (Chibisova, Zvonova, 2020). In the 1960s–70s, the opposition of "the changing and the unchanging in the evolution of musical thinking" (Kholopov, 1982), reflected in theoretical studies, came to the realm of mass culture through the system of music education and broad musical practice (including journalism). This process was accompanied by an increasing role of the author's originality, who often created and used his own musical system in only one work (Kholopov, 1978, 169–199).

Sustained changes in the harmonic and tonal syntax of the musical language of popular culture (Léveillé Gauvin, 2015), vividly manifested in the search for new harmonic consistency and logic of development (De Clercq, 2015), occur under the basic conditions of popular music – to bring pleasure, to be liked, even causing negative emotions, civic anger, or other strong stirring feelings (Mehl et al., 2023). As N.V. Kret points out, "musical works striving to express the Sublime go beyond simple entertainment and offer the listener an experience of transcendence, power, and terror, contributing to a deepening of emotional and intellectual understanding of the world" (Kret, 2026, 95). E.A. Bodina develops the same idea in her research, stating that in modern education "calls for the need to cultivate developed aesthetic

taste and the ability for artistic creativity are heard in parallel" (Bodina, 2025, 89). Another pressing problem, in addition to the unnatural introduction of the developing personality of the student (as an individual) to "external" social norms, is the leveling of the ever-increasing cognitive noise, which significantly hinders the search for personal identity and the acquisition of genuine understanding of oneself and one's creative abilities. According to researchers I.A. Korsakova and M.M. Sadritdinova, in the modern world, the problem of comprehending "the redundancy of the information space comes to the fore in such facets as: authentic knowledge and 'information noise,' fragmentariness and superficiality of knowledge, speed of perception and depth of knowledge acquisition" (Korsakova, Sadritdinova, 2025, 9).

Thus, the "figure in black", woven from contradictions, recedes into the background, the realm of rumors, gossip, and commercial image, and instead of it we see the authentic Blackmore – a very integral, strong, multifaceted, and, yes, of course complex personality. Of course, our goal is not to write a "truthful biography" of Ritchie Blackmore (or another history of the groups "Deep Purple", "Rainbow", and "Blackmore's Night"), but to attempt to analyze and understand the reasons he was able to go much further than gifted rock musicians of the 1970s, as well as to preserve and realize his creative potential throughout his long life – this, in our opinion, is certainly worthwhile.

Creative Potential of the Personality

The general social causes and conditions for the formation of the musical phenomenon of the late 1960s and early 1970s have long been known and described – peaceful and not-so-peaceful youth movements in the United States and Western Europe, based on a demand for freedom of creativity, personal independence, rising prosperity, and social reforms that created a favorable environment – all this is not empty words. But behind these external factors a deep content rooted in human nature lies. Researching in the field, the scientist Verneert and colleagues develop the idea that, "as the need for more creative and open pedagogical-artistic strategies has been emphasized by many and the coaches in the TOSO project reach a very diverse group of people and succeed in finding a way of working with music that is 'relevant to the musical self,' we deemed it important to look closely into the pedagogical-artistic strategies of the coaches in this project. <...> We believe that the diversity of artistic-pedagogical strategies found in community music projects needs to be implemented throughout music teacher education <...> and can play a role in changing society through music" (Verneert et al., 2024, 14–15). According to S. Moscovici's definition, "social psychology is a science that studies the conflict between the individual and society" (Moscovici, 2007, 19). Let us add – the universal and inevitable conflict in all its diverse manifestations. And here a natural question may arise – why is this conflict inevitable? What about "man is man's friend, comrade, and brother?" and all that sort of thing? Let us try to figure it out.

Every person is born unique, different from all other humanity. This is not a metaphor, this is a "medical fact" – the DNA of each individual is unique. That is, the need to manifest, assert, and realize one's initially individual – physiological, and then, as one develops, personal uniqueness is embedded in each of us already at the genetic level. This need was called childhood vitality by the founder of the psychosocial theory of development, E. Erikson, and he considered it the main internal driving force of human development throughout life. The author J. Korostenskiene explains that "humanism is perceived here as an anthropocentric paradigm of free education <...> grounded in the values of democracy, human dignity and recognition of human individuality" (Korostenskiene, 2022, 3). In the same vein, Winarko and Budiwati (2024, 1) emphasize that "humanistic pedagogy offers an alternative educational framework that focuses on the holistic development of students, emphasizing autonomy, emotional well-being, and personalized learning" (Winarko & Budiwati, 2024, 1), which is directly consonant with the task of the fullest possible realization of childhood vitality. And here the problem inevitably arises – how far in the social space can each of us go in realizing this need? In other words – where does my freedom end, including freedom of self-expression? Where does the freedom of another person begin? And with what, excuse me, authority, especially if this "other" is not particularly sympathetic to me (just as perhaps I am to him)? Let him better move over with his freedom!

Once upon a time, this dilemma was resolved according to the "law of the jungle" – whoever has stronger fists, a heavier club, whoever is more "cold-blooded", is more freely. A natural, archetypal echo of this approach can be observed in countless children's squabbles over various, often incomprehensible to adults, external reasons, with the background of the indicated existential contradiction. But at some extent in human history, social structures began to emerge whose main purpose in the context under consideration was precisely the regulation of these relations – determining the boundaries and forms where community members could realize their childhood vitality in a socially acceptable form. In science, it is known, as socialization. At different times, in different societies, existing norms set a very different range for the realization of childhood vitality of their members – from the widest possible space of opportunities, "everything not prohibited is permitted", to petty regulation of private life, "everything not permitted is prohibited". In this sense, in the United States and Western European countries during the period, we began our discussion with, a number of socio-economic, socio-political, and socio-psychological factors converged, thus contributed to the expansion of the space of personal opportunities and human self-realization.

However, even in the most favorable conditions of this kind, socialization inevitably, one way or another, limits the manifestations of an individual's childhood vitality. Hence the inevitable conflict between the individual and society

follows, S. Moscovici wrote about. And every person – consciously or not, is essentially forced throughout his life to resolve this dilemma – how to maximize the realization of his childhood vitality while remaining within the normative field of the community he is a member. Or, in other words, how to manifest one's free will, freedom of self-expression and self-realization, without infringing on the freedom of others.

The answer to this extremely complex question, as well as to many other similar questions, is found in the Bible: "Man is created in the image and likeness of God". Some perceive this postulate literally, others as a beautiful metaphor, but in any case it is useful to think about what exactly is meant – what exactly do these "image and likeness" consist of (leaving aside the notion of God as an old man in white robes sitting on clouds)? One of the definitions of God often found in the Bible is "Creator", the creator of all things. And in this, in our opinion, lies the essence of the "spark of God" originally embedded in man. Man is capable of creativity and he is like God in this option. And it is precisely the ability to create – to create something new, unique, reflecting the personality, the soul of the creator – that is the most adequate, practical answer to the question posed above. Researcher A. Fung adds: "Music is a key element in realizing personal and collective identities that are formed in the intersection of affective life experiences" (Fung, 2022, 2). Note one can create in any field of activity – according to S.L. Rubinstein's definition, activity: 1) is always the activity of a subject (i.e., a person, not an animal or a machine); 2)

activity is the interaction of a subject with an object, i.e., it is necessarily objective and substantive; 3) it is always creative; 4) it is independent (Rubinstein, 2003). In this sense, the established concept of "creative activity" is an obvious tautology. At the same time, it is impossible to deny that there are a number of areas of human activity providing expanded opportunities for creativity, but the ability and readiness to create is the most important criterion of professional mastery. Such areas certainly include art in the broad sense of the word and musical art in particular. At the same time, not every musician is a creator "by definition". A performer-creator is always unique; he conveys his original reading, understanding, and vision of the work and thereby realizes his childhood vitality. Simple, even ideally accurate, reproduction of notes – the dream of many unimaginative music teachers (just as the dream of equally unimaginative mathematics teachers is to always hear the correct answer) – is not creativity; in this process there is no subject. Such a performer essentially acts as an animate appendage to the musical instrument, just as a worker on an assembly line acts as an animate appendage to the machine.

And here it is appropriate to ask another question – why some people are ready and able to create, while others, even possessing a high level of technical skills, are not.

The Biographical Method of Research

In the humanities, the biographical method of research is widely used (Musagulova, Shakhaieva, 2023). When analyzing the creative process and assessing the social and artistic significance

of creative products, scholars rely on the study of the development of a creative career, personality traits, individual differences, and turning points in biography. The search for ways to increase the objectivity of conclusions leads to an appeal to reflective essays (Ovchinnikova, 2024), analysis of memories and interviews of people who knew the artist-creator closely (Hill et al., 2011), and analysis of the cultural and historical context of his work (Shcherbakova, 2024). Trying to overcome the possible subjectivity of the biographical method, modern researchers propose to conceptually organize key biographical stages and internal factors explaining aspects of creative development (Priilaid, Callaghan, 2023).

The desire to move away from subjective interpretation and assumptions leads to the need to analyze artistic language, providing objective measuring the psychological characteristics of the personality and the patterns of the creative process through the means of expression (in musical language – harmony, form, melody, rhythm, and others) the composer uses (Boyd, 2017). As future directions of research in the field of aesthetics and artistic creativity, a shift toward the inclusion of interdisciplinary approaches and the use of more advanced statistical modeling is considered (Specker, 2025). The multidisciplinary paradigm corresponds to the peculiarities of the development of modern artistic, in particular musical, thinking, symbolism, and syncretism of forms of contemporary art (Zvonova, 2025). Psychological theory as a basis for the analysis of works of art has been the foundation of scientific study

throughout the development of psychology and gives excellent results in the modern world (Işık, 2026). However, which psychological theory will become the basis of biographical analysis and allow the implementation of the multidisciplinary paradigm (Ilyin, 2020)?

The Epigenetic Map of the Personality Life Cycle according to E. Erikson

The most comprehensive and well-grounded answer to this question, in our view, can be revealed by the epigenetic map of the personality life cycle developed by E. Erikson. He represented the life of an individual as eight successive stages, within each a person experiences an existential conflict of development. By and large, each of these conflicts reflects the contradiction between the need to realize childhood vitality, in forms reflecting the specifics of a particular age stage, and its inevitable external limitations. Thus, within the framework of our research there is neither the opportunity nor the expediency to present the psychosocial theory of development in full, but for understanding the phenomenon of Ritchie Blackmore, it makes sense to briefly characterize these stages, specifically in terms of the formation and realization of the ability and readiness to create.

So, the first stage of psychosocial development of an individual occurs in the first year of life – infancy. The conflict of this stage is expressed by the dichotomy "trust versus mistrust". The reference figure on whom the resolution of this conflict decisively depends is, naturally, the mother. In the first year of a child's life, a basic attitude is formed, at the subconscious level, in the perception of the

surrounding world. In the context under consideration, this is the answer to the question of the unknown environment, where through no will of his own, the newborn suddenly finds himself. Is it a space of opportunities, a world that is generally benevolent, accepting, understanding, providing primary needs according to A. Maslow, and therefore conducive to focusing on interaction with other people, self-expression, and self-realization? Or is it a gloomy, rejecting environment in which everything is divided, in which the newly appeared "extra mouth", and even more so his individual uniqueness, is of no use to anyone, where he literally has to fight for physical survival with a hostile and suspicious social environment? It is clear that in the first case, the basis for the manifestation of childhood vitality is laid; in the second, it is actually blocked at the embryonic level.

The second stage covers the period from one to three years. E. Erikson designated the conflict of this stage as "autonomy versus shame and doubt". Here, the father figure is added to the maternal reference figure. At this stage, the foundations of the subjectivity of the personality are potentially laid, the essence described by E. Erikson as "the courage to be an independent individual who can choose and build his own future" (Erikson, 1996, 124). From the point of view of realizing childhood vitality, in the process of interacting with parents, the child receives an answer to the question of whether he can be himself. Can he, within certain boundaries, do what he wants, and not what he can or should? An important

external indicator of subjectivity is the ability and readiness to say "no". This problem is not about compulsive denial of everything and everyone, but precisely about the ability to take and state one's own reasoned position, independent, including from recognized authorities, canons, algorithms, etc.

The third stage of psychosocial development occurs between the ages of three and six and is a natural continuation of the previous one from the point of view of the development of individual subjectivity. The conflict of this stage is expressed by the telling dichotomy "initiative versus guilt", and to the reference figures are grandparents and any siblings. If at the previous stage of development the child's natural need was to ensure some personal space he can fully be himself, now he strives to go beyond the boundaries of this space into the wider world with his desires, fantasies and ideas, which is potentially greatly facilitated by mastering speech not just as a means of communication, but as an effective way to "get into" the heads and consciousness of others, as attributed to V.A. Petrovsky, to become "ideally represented" in the social environment. It is precisely a result of resolving the conflict "initiative versus guilt" that the leading subconscious motive of personality activity is formed – the orientation toward achievement or avoidance of failure.

The fourth stage of psychosocial development occurs in early school age – from six to twelve years. The basic conflict of this stage is "competence versus inferiority", and the circle of reference figures expands significantly to include

significant adults in general – teachers, neighbors, parents of classmates, etc. If at the previous stages of psychosocial development the question was essentially "Do I have the right and opportunity to create in this life?", now this question moves into the realm of "doing" – "Can I be a creator?" In other words, can I achieve the most ambitious goals, realize any projects that seem fantastic, overcome the inevitable difficulties associated with this? This is not about the notorious knowledge, skills, and abilities (which in themselves, of course, are important), but about the deep subconscious confidence of the individual that he is truly good, that he "can"; this is, about the psychology of a winner. The most important condition for a positive resolution of this crisis is that the child finds a socially significant area of application of his efforts that would be truly fascinating for him and where he would achieve real success valued by significant adults. Parents who crave excellent grades in all school subjects with the mandatory addition of outstanding results in a couple of sports sections and learning the piano are doing their children a disservice.

The fifth stage of psychosocial development occurs in adolescence. In E. Erikson's classical interpretation, it covers the age period from 13 to 20 years. The reference figures here are peers and informal authorities, who may also be older people. In reality, the resolution of the basic conflict of this stage – "identity versus psychosocial confusion" – often turns out to be greatly protracted and extends far beyond the upper boundary designated by E. Erikson. This is due to the

objective complexity of the intrapersonal processes occurring at this stage of psychosocial development of the personality. In the context under consideration, the essence of the conflict of the fifth stage lies in the individual's search for his real "I". Let us explain this with an example. Let us imagine that a little boy has an older brother whom he loves and respects. He says to himself: "My brother is a great guy, I want to be like him". Thus, the child identifies with this significant figure and begins to copy his brother. For example, if the brother plays the guitar well, the boy also begins to learn to play the guitar. But by adolescence, with a favorable course of personality development, our boy begins to realize: "Yes, my brother is really great, but I am not him, I am different" – childhood identification ceases to work. And then, in all its complexity, the natural question arises – who is the real "I"? What am I like? In particular, is playing the guitar really my true calling, or does the true calling of my real "I" lie in something else? The most important external condition for a successful search for an answer to all these complex questions, E. Erikson considered what he called psychosocial moratorium. "By psychosocial moratorium we mean a delay in assuming adult responsibilities... This period is characterized by selective indulgence on the part of society and defiant carefreeness on the part of youth, and yet it leads to significant, although often transient, achievements and ends with a more or less formal confirmation of achievement by society" (Erikson, 1996, 167). The classical social form of experiencing the moratorium by young

people is university education. With a positive resolution of the developmental crisis under consideration, the individual acquires the inner strength to be himself and to realize childhood vitality, reinforced by satisfaction from the fact that he is engaged in "his own business" and success in this business. If this does not happen, a person is essentially doomed to "beat his head against the wall", trying to achieve success in something for which "he has no heart", or, even worse, being outwardly quite successful, he does not experience inner satisfaction and, moreover, suffers because this is "not his" success.

The sixth stage of psychosocial development occurs in early adulthood (in the standard scheme of the epigenetic map, 20–25 years). The basic conflict of this stage is "intimacy versus isolation", and the reference figures are friends and sexual partners. At the same time, intimacy in this case is understood in the broad sense of the word – essentially it is about the ability to establish adequate relationships of closeness in a broad social context. Recall that adequate relationships of closeness always imply a certain distance – otherwise a pathological form of relationship known as symbiotic dependence arises. Essentially, this is about the second – "adult" edition of the problem of boundaries. At this stage the answer is found (or not) to the question – how to realize one's free will without infringing on the freedom of others.

The seventh stage of psychosocial development covers mature adulthood – from 26 to 60 years. The reference figures here are family members and colleagues at work. The basic conflict is expressed by the

dichotomy "generativity versus stagnation". Generativity implies the ability and readiness of a mature personality to take responsibility for the renewal and improvement of everything that can contribute to the preservation and improvement of culture as a whole. In practical terms, this issue involves creating conditions for the realization of childhood vitality of younger generations, not limited to adequate parental care of children. It is about understanding and accepting by the individual the needs for self-expression and self-realization of those who are younger in age, lower in social status, qualification, etc. From the point of view of creativity, this is the answer to the question – whom do I create for? A positive resolution of this conflict means not just that the results of creativity are in demand in the sense that someone is willing to pay for them, but that they meet the deep, vital needs of other people, thereby contributing to their development and changing the world as a whole (Maysak, Ilyin, 2019). The destructive alternative to generativity means the eternal suffering of "unrecognized geniuses", the despair of a person "writing for the drawer", or primitive commercialization of creativity.

The eighth stage of psychosocial development occurs after age 60. The basic conflict of this stage is "integrity versus despair", and the reference figures are humanity as a whole, religious and philosophical authorities. According to E. Erikson's interpretation, this is the age to begin to take stock, as well as to restructure one's life in the light of inevitable age-related changes. Every person who lives to this stage inevitably faces two very simple

and at the same time very complex questions – what truly important I have done in my life and what can I still do, as there is not so much time left. A positive resolution of this conflict means that the individual perceives his life path with all its ups and downs as a unique and unconditional value, but also finds and masters new forms of realizing his childhood vitality that are adequate to changing opportunities and circumstances. According to E. Erikson, "with such a final consolidation, death loses its torment" (Erikson, 1996, 257). Despair, on the other hand – a consequence of the conviction that life has been wasted – is directly related to the fear of death and "expresses the awareness that there is too little time left to try to start a new life and try other paths to integrity" (Erikson, 1996, 258).

Possibilities of Applying the Theory of Psychosocial Development in the Use of the Biographical Method

So, we have examined the stages of the personality life cycle from the point of view of their connection with the individual's readiness and ability for creativity. Next, we intend to analyze through the prism of the resolution of the described developmental crises the life path of Ritchie Blackmore, based on his own interviews and interviews with his immediate circle, as well as on the results of his work³.

Let us start with the facts not reliably obvious. Richard Hugh Blackmore was

born on April 14, 1945. This fact is reliable. How, when, and in what way Richard Hugh managed to turn the standard, common abbreviation of the name Richard into Dick (which also has an extremely indecent meaning) into the short and sonorous abbreviation "Ritchie" is known only to God. But it was his name at school.

Thus little is reliably known about Ritchie Blackmore's early years. But some facts are known. His father worked as an air traffic controller at the airport – a responsible and well-paid position. The future king of the guitar's mother had her own small shop. Ritchie was born in an objectively very difficult time overall; as post-war England was hungry and cold, but in a quite prosperous, middle-class family. He never complained about an arduous childhood.

We can assume and even assert some information about the early years of this amazing person's life based on known facts. Ritchie Blackmore throughout his life violated, as a composer and performer, every conceivable and inconceivable musical canon. He periodically changed the lineups of his groups; yes, the music was always written by Ritchie Blackmore, and the public always flocked to the guitar exercises of Ritchie Blackmore – let us honestly admit this. And then something worthy of attention begins. The widely known interpretation of Blackmore's life and behavior is simple – yes, a great guitarist, but quarrelsome, scandalous, a complete narcissist, etc.

³ The article uses materials from an interview with Ritchie Blackmore: Alexander Pronyakin. Ritchie Blackmore Metall Magazin Interview September 1993. URL: <https://youtu.be/r4goh4BLfss?is=MCZ0HCn->

[s_bvIOz3](https://youtu.be/s_bvIOz3) (accessed: 05.04.2025); Vasiliy JLT Ritchie Blackmore Story (русский перевод). URL: <https://youtu.be/YCYth5g1Wpg?is=QKexJBjLANTkH8Oo> (accessed: 05.04.2025).

From the point of view of psychosocial theory of development, this looks different. Blackmore perceived the world as a space of opportunities, a space for maximum realization of his childhood vitality. By the way, none of the musicians "offended" by him ever claimed that Blackmore robbed, fleeced, appropriated, etc.

So Ritchie was most likely lucky with his mother — in infancy, the psychosocial developmental conflict "trust versus mistrust" was resolved quite positively. By the way, Blackmore himself — certainly a born introvert — explains his "unsociability" during the "Deep Purple" period very rationally and convincingly: "Thanks to this, I could walk the streets, go to shops, cinemas. No one pointed a finger at me. I could live a quiet, normal life".

Next, continuing the psychosocial study of the genius, we have a very curious fact. From interview to interview, Ritchie Blackmore recalls a story from his childhood. His mother invited a photographer to capture her son, but he refused to pose and asked the question: "Why do you need my photo — here I am". Eventually, his mother apparently persuaded him. This photo can be found on the internet; it is clearly formal and staged — Richard Hugh stands there on some kind of elevation in an ironed Boy Scout uniform.

This means that, firstly, the boy could say "no" to his mother, apparently without fear of any serious consequences. Let us not forget that this is about "good old England" of the late 1940s and early 1950s, where corporal punishment of children was common. Blackmore himself recounts that at school he periodically received it from

teachers and the principal (they probably hit his fingers, not knowing what they were doing). In his family, apparently, this kind of upbringing was not practiced.

And, secondly, the boy did not just "kick back" against the photographing procedure; he offered his mother a quite reasonable alternative — here I am, alive, cool, I can hug you, you can hug me, let's play — what the hell do you need a piece of cardboard with my dead image for?

It seems that childhood vitality simply gushed out of Richard Hugh, and credit must be given to his parents (I suspect it was not easy with him) — they did not try to package this fountain into a pipe. Recalling his parents, Blackmore characterizes his father as a man who wanted "everything to be done right" — apparently, from him he inherited his perhaps extreme perfectionism. The father's exactingness was balanced by the mother's position: "Lewis, leave him alone — let him do what he wants!". This is a very important point. Here we do not have a schizophrenic, mutually exclusive contradictoriness of parental messages to the child, "You must do everything right!" — "No, you can do what you want!" The mother is not addressing the boy; she is addressing the father — "do not pressure him, allow him to be himself". As a result, Ritchie Blackmore apparently took away from early childhood a very important lesson, from the point of view of psychosocial development of the personality, an enormous wealth, the essence of which can be expressed by the formula: you can do what you want, but you must do it well, as best as possible. Not everyone is as lucky as Ritchie Blackmore!

In his interview given to Swedish television in the early 1990s, Blackmore briefly and very precisely, in our opinion, formulated the essence of an autonomous personal position: "I do not want to hurt others. But if I do not meet others' expectations, that is their problem". The fact that both the second and third stages of psychosocial development received a positive resolution is also revealed by another indirect but rather striking fact. The phrase "Deep Purple", which went down in rock music history, is nothing other than the title of an old song performed on the piano by Blackmore's grandmother (he does not specify which side). So, he had quite positive and significant relationships with at least one member of the extended family in childhood.

And then we move on to perhaps the most famous and extremely important period of Ritchie Blackmore's childhood (he is still Richard and is starting elementary school). In the standard, repeated from article to article, "internet" version, this story sounds something like this: Ritchie Blackmore studied very poorly at school; his father bought him a guitar and threatened that if he did not learn to play it, he would break the guitar over his head.

What actually happened? Young Richard did indeed study mediocrely. It was not about a lack of ability. As he himself recounts, once he asked his father to help him solve a math problem. Dad solved it; the next day the teacher said: "Blackmore, the answer is correct, but you solved the problem not the way I taught you!" A familiar story? Based on the

totality of such precedents, Ritchie came, in his words, to a curious conclusion – "if I study well, I will become like the schoolteachers, and I do not want to be like them". A very precisely formulated subconscious motive that many schoolchildren are guided by to this day.

At age 11, he asked (like many modern boys and girls) to buy him a guitar. As for the threat of Blackmore Sr. to break the instrument over his son's head for negligence, as Ritchie recalls, "something like that seems to have happened", but judging by the context and how he tells it, it was clearly a joke. Seriously, his father stated that he would like his son to take this seriously (everything must be done right!) and then paid for a year of lessons with a classical guitar teacher. A very revealing episode, again from the point of view of positive resolution of the second and third stages of psychosocial development and productive parent-child relations in general. "I want a guitar", the boy says to his father. "Okay, you will get it, on certain conditions – you must truly learn to play it, and I will provide the necessary conditions". The child acts as a subject, declares his need, shows initiative – literally initiates a process that includes financial, organizational, and other aspects. The father accepts this as a position undoubtedly deserving careful and respectful attention, and does not resort, for example, to the cheap manipulative bargaining so popular with many parents – get a high grade in math and you will get a guitar. But he introduces children's subjectivity into certain boundaries related specifically to the need to have a guitar, thereby, by the way,

contributing to a positive resolution of the conflict "competence versus inferiority".

The boy tried. The teacher lived quite far away, four miles away (rounding down, 7.5 km). He rode his bicycle to have lessons – 15 and a bit kilometers round trip, including in winter, and with a guitar – not an easy bike ride for an 11-year-old boy. He fell more than once, quite painfully, but he rode. Existing biographies say that he was distinguished by determination, perseverance, and quickly mastered and performed complex classical guitar pieces. Blackmore describes this period of his life differently. The classical guitar teacher constantly reproached him for being lazy and not practicing at home. When telling this, Blackmore uses the word "practice" – in the context of systematic training (arpeggios, etc.). According to his own words, "I fully realized the importance of 'practice' much later and began to do it systematically". (According to Candice Night's testimony, even at 60 he systematically practiced "practice" at home on acoustic guitar and other string instruments, often loudly and sharply expressing dissatisfaction with the results of his efforts.)

After studying for a year, the boy began to sit for hours on the porch of the neighbor, the outstanding, from Blackmore's point of view, guitarist of those times, Big Jim Sullivan, waiting for his attention. Whether it was long or short, the idol of young Ritchie indeed taught him what was interesting and exciting – the specifics of performing on an electric guitar.

As a result of these lessons, Ritchie Blackmore did a simple thing – he got a

pickup from somewhere, "attached" it to his acoustic guitar (on the question of the father threatening almost murder if he did something "wrong" to the guitar) and "plugged" the whole thing into a cheap radio receiver. This is exactly how he describes his beginnings.

And here we come to the main thing that happened at this stage of Ritchie Blackmore's life.

So, elementary school. The boy is indeed unsuccessful in most "classical" and "main" school subjects (though not distinguished by any outstanding physical abilities, young Ritchie was good at football, swimming, and javelin throwing). But not at all because he is biologically stupid, starving, subjected to systematic abuse in the family, etc. Nothing of the kind. The boy said to himself: first, I do not want to be like the schoolteachers. And second – my schoolteachers will say that Blackmore is the worst student in the school, but even they will admit that Blackmore plays the guitar better than anyone. The boy is 12 years old. He found the most important thing – what he is really good at, what he will be successful in. And, most importantly – how to remain himself in this success – unique and inimitable, how to realize his childhood vitality. Ritchie Blackmore found the answer to this question, the answer that very many, not the least intelligent people, search for their entire lives, at age 12.

So far, in the psychosocial development of young Ritchie Blackmore, everything is going well, in a certain sense almost ideally. But then, perhaps in the most difficult period, with the beginning of the fifth stage of psychosocial development,

very ambiguous, at first glance, fluctuations begin. First of all, after studying for a year with a professional classical guitar teacher, he essentially switches to self-education and spontaneous informal learning from J. Sullivan. It fits perfectly into the logic of the conflict "identity versus psychosocial confusion" – Ritchie realizes that the classical acoustic guitar is not his way and tries to find his true self in performing popular music on the electric guitar, with an informal adult leader before his eyes.

But at 15, Blackmore drops out of school and goes to work. Almost all internet biographies say that he got a job as an apprentice radio technician at the airport where his father worked. A 15-year-old teenager going to work instead of continuing his education is clearly not the best option for experiencing a psychosocial moratorium and a favorable resolution of the conflict "identity versus psychosocial confusion". But the essence, as often happens, lies in the details.

As far as can be judged, young Ritchie was not forced to go to work "for a piece of bread". It was a conscious decision, based on two motives: negative – aversion to school, and positive – the desire to earn money for a real electric guitar. This work activity did not last long. Having implemented his desire to become the owner of a coveted guitar, young Blackmore plunges headlong into the world of the music show business. From the age of 17, he regularly works as a session guitarist. "On some days I had four

sessions, and I made good money". By the way, this means that no matter how lazy Ritchie was while studying classical guitar, his technique was in a perfect order – who would invite a 17-year-old boy to record, and for "good money", if he could not accurately and qualitatively perform the proposed material? This was undoubtedly useful experience; as Blackmore notes, "session work is very disciplining". From the age of 19, Ritchie begins to perform on stage, accompanying various musicians, including quite famous ones at the time, such as Jerry Lee Lewis; he joins several "second-tier" groups (staying the longest with The Outlaws), tours with them around England, and begins to tour abroad, particularly in Germany – in a word, a quite ordinary beginning of a guitarist's career in the 1960s.

However, in this ordinariness, there is something important for our analysis. On the one hand, the teenager plunges into the specific world of show business, a world with its own unwritten laws, "behind-the-scenes" currents, greed and dishonesty, sometimes outright cruelty. When asked if he had any advice for beginner guitarists, the 81-year-old Blackmore, with his characteristic inimitable sense of humor, replied: "Yes, I do. Let them hire a lawyer"⁴. It is clear that it is not the best social environment for a positive resolution of the basic conflict of the fifth stage of psychosocial development – rather the opposite. But, on the other hand, it was a specific environment, largely isolated from "adult" everyday life, corresponding to the

⁴ Richie Blackmore – Live Interview. URL: <https://youtu.be/5PRE4UqT2HE?is=NyiS-hTcjPTP9xFF> (accessed: 05.04.2025).

inner personal needs and aspirations of young Blackmore, allowing constant communication with peers who shared similar interests and authoritative figures in this field. So psychosocial moratorium – very specific and contradictory – did take place in Ritchie Blackmore's youth. Including, due to its specificity, the search for an answer to the question "who am I, the real, the authentic?" turned out to be greatly protracted by a number of signs. But the basis for a positive resolution of the conflict "identity versus psychosocial confusion" was laid in the sensitive age. An important role was played by a strong intrapersonal "foundation" formed, as we have tried to show above, in childhood. It allowed young Blackmore not only not to get lost among the countless groups and performers playing at warm-ups, parties, in second-rate clubs, etc., but also to gain experience of stage performances (especially important for a truly withdrawn and shy introverted teenager), make useful contacts, and become, in the first approximation, recognizable.

However, chance plays an important role in life – as they say, the stars must remain align. Such a chance for Ritchie Blackmore was a rather strange story that happened in 1968. He received a call from the then quite famous drummer Chris Curtis (Blackmore was living in Germany at the time), who said he had found a sponsor for a new group and offered him to become the second guitarist. Blackmore (according to him, he was "starving" then) replied: "Okay, who will be the first?" "Me", said Curtis. "And who will play the drums?" "Me too". "And bass?" "Me". "Is

there anyone else in this group?". "Yes, keyboardist Jon Lord".

This amazing group did come together, and thus the acquaintance of Ritchie Blackmore and Jon Lord took place. The one-man band for some reason almost immediately left his brainchild, and Blackmore and Lord, after playing together, decided that they suited each other very well (it is important that they agreed on the desire to introduce classical music and performance canons into the popular genre, although they saw it differently). Ritchie suggested inviting Ian Paice, a drummer, he had met earlier, and Jon suggested Nic Simper, a bassist. Vocalist Rod Evans joined them. Thus the first lineup of what, at Ritchie Blackmore's suggestion, was named "Deep Purple", emerged. This lineup did not last long, but was quite productive – released three albums, toured extensively, and achieved some success. Mostly the group's repertoire consisted of cover versions of popular country songs, and the arranging was mainly done by Ritchie Blackmore – for him it was a "warm-up".

Everything changes dramatically in late 1969. At the suggestion of Blackmore himself, impressed by the musical innovations of "Led Zeppelin" and especially the vocals of Robert Plant, Ian Gillan is invited to the group. Along with him comes a bassist Roger Glover. Thus, the legendary lineup "Mark II" emerges, which turned out to be capable of creating an original product, of realizing the idea of integrating classical motifs into rock music. And here Blackmore's talent and childhood vitality manifested to the fullest. According to Jon Lord's recollections, "Ritchie was an

amazing musician in terms of guitar riffs. Almost wasteful. They just fell out of him. And it was heaven, absolute heaven for the band, because a guitarist never repeats himself — Ritchie never repeated himself, he would not go down the same road twice". Moreover, it was not just guitar riffs that "fell out" of Blackmore; they "fell out" of many at the time. Already at that early stage of his work, he created innovative, if not in compositional, then at least in performance terms, musical works. Let us illustrate this with the example of perhaps the simplest (and probably for this very reason the most famous) piece written by Ritchie Blackmore at that time.

There was a period when he could not calmly hear the phrase "Smoke on the Water". Blackmore's irritation was caused by the fact that his "calling card" was far from the best composition he had written for "Deep Purple". "It's not bad — no more than that; after all, it's only four notes". Later, having become more calm and even philosophical about many things, not only musical, Ritchie Blackmore explained to fans the technique of performing this riff. "Most guitarists play it in thirds. That's wrong. The correct way is to play it in fourths (Ritchie demonstrates the difference on an acoustic guitar). In this case, the sound acquires a gloomy, even ominous tinge, and four notes acquire meaning"⁵. The sequence of harmonies consisting of parallel fourths, bearing the name "perfect consonance", is not welcome in the theory of classical harmony. The perfect consonance was an important part of the musical language of the European

Middle Ages and Renaissance. The "break" of classical harmony — is not a protest for the sake of a protest; it is not a spot from a bucket of paint splashed onto a canvas with the comment: "The artist sees it that way!" It is an almost mathematically precise choice by the creator of the means to convey to the listener his worldview, the meaning embedded in the work, and the induction of auditory and visual images. The use of the interval of fourths plays the role of predictive coding, an effective means of managing the perception of aesthetic information (Leder, Pelowski, 2024).

Later, already in adulthood, Blackmore, recalling the early 1970s, said: "Back then I wanted to play as fast and as loud as possible. Now I understand that it means nothing at all. Sometimes you can play fast, but it's important to say something profound, not just show — look how cool I am, how I can do it!" Apparently, Blackmore subconsciously had already used this criterion — "to say something profound" — even when he wanted to just play fast and loud — a quite teenage desire that many guitarists get stuck on for life. This same clear tinge of archaic teenage ways of resolving conflicts related to the struggle for space to realize one's childhood vitality was initially present in the confrontation with Gillan. "He was what you call an alpha male, and I was the same. He wanted to control everything, and so did I. We were like two bears in one den". As we noted above, the resolution of the conflict of the fifth stage of psychosocial development, for quite objective reasons, apparently dragged on

⁵ Ritchie Blackmore discussing the writing & recording of 'Smoke On The Water'. URL:

https://youtu.be/Vc7nBoEaEhs?is=A_nW3Vik_7r4w6lr (accessed: 02.02.2026)

for Blackmore. A strong and quite functional intrapersonal basis was formed, but the search for identity, the search for a final answer to the question "who am I?", primarily as a musician and creator, continued (one of the paradoxes of Ritchie Blackmore's personality is that this search seems to have continued throughout most of his life).

But in 1970 he turned 25 – in purely formal age terms, he had already "leaped over" the stage of early adulthood and was entering the time of maturity. But what about the problem of the sixth stage – the problem of boundaries, what about the ability and readiness to realize one's freedom, including freedom of creativity, without infringing on the freedom of others?

With this, at first glance, everything was very unfavorable. Those who like to "point out" Blackmore's lack of empathy, dictatorial tendencies, consumerist attitude toward colleagues, etc., most often refer to the endless rotation of the lineups of his groups. To some extent, Blackmore confirms this: "For me, the main thing is music. I don't care about politics or the lineup. The music must be good and well performed" (one can almost hear the voice of Lewis Blackmore – can't one?). But here, as always, details and context are important. Blackmore did not fire many musicians – they left themselves, like, for example, the most famous member of "Rainbow" after Ritchie – Ronnie James Dio. The reasons for the parting of Dio and Blackmore are described differently – the former cites creative differences, the latter believes that at the instigation of his girlfriend, Dio became fixated on the idea

that Ritchie was taking all the glory for himself. In any case, it was Dio's decision, not Blackmore's. Of course, there were cases of rather unceremonious dismissal of people, caused not only by the harsh demands (including on himself) of Blackmore's perfectionism, but also by his personal stylistic and taste preferences (keyboardist Tony Carey did not play football, vocalist Graham Bonnet had too short a haircut, etc.). But these are details; let us turn to the context. Who became "victims" of Blackmore's "authoritarianism"? Defenseless, socially vulnerable people deprived of choice? Nothing of the kind – these were quite successful, highly paid professionals, for many of them cooperation with Blackmore became a serious impetus for career development in the music show business. So they had a choice. And if Blackmore did not meet someone's expectations, well, "that's their problem". By the way, while rigidly, sometimes aggressively defending his own freedom, he was by no means devoid of the ability to respect the freedom of others. Blackmore explains his departure from "Deep Purple" in 1975 by the fact that under the influence of Hughes and Coverdale, the group was increasingly plunging into the "funk" style. "I didn't want to play this music – there's no soul in it. I wanted to play hard rock or the majestic music of the European Renaissance". We dare to assume that if he had wanted to, Ritchie could have "pushed through" his own preferences, as he had done more than once before and after. But he chose his own path, giving his colleagues in "Deep Purple" the opportunity to go their own way.

In 1975, Blackmore celebrated his 30th birthday. By formal age boundaries, he is already in the era of maturity. But the search for an answer to the question "who am I" continues. The quote above reflects an internal contradiction. Ritchie knows exactly what he does not want to play, but in positive motivation there is a clear split – hard rock or Renaissance music? If one, so to speak, "digs" really deep, one can find something that unites both directions, namely the idea of freedom of creativity and self-expression, in other words, the full realization of a person's childhood vitality. But as for musical forms and cultural stylistics in general, these are almost mutually exclusive things. Paradoxically, meeting and collaborating with Dio – an outstanding vocalist, greatly fascinated by classical "fantasy", particularly the works of J. Tolkien – allowed Ritchie to quite organically combine the incompatible at this stage of his work. Yes, by and large, it was probably eclecticism, but eclecticism of a very high level.

Blackmore realizes his "mutually exclusive" preferences in a variety of musical forms – from the generally banal performance of "16th Century Greensleeves" in a hard rock interpretation to original, exquisitely beautiful lyrical compositions like "Temple of the King" and "Catch the Rainbow", stylized as ancient ballads, and complex philosophical works such as "Stargazer" and "Gates of Babylon". Dio's lyrics add a medieval flavor. Already at this stage of his work, Blackmore effectively abandoned the desire to "play as fast and loud as possible". His delivery is distinguished by extraordinary depth and thoughtfulness; he boldly experiments,

combining "incompatible" performance techniques. Technical searches are dictated by the author's established harmonic thinking, which boldly combines the logic of tonal ("classical") harmony, the legacy of the past, and fantasies of new harmonies. Harmonic schemes require the search for technical possibilities (Doll, 2017). Let us leave it to philosophers to discuss cosmopolitan harmony and aesthetic agonism (Gingerich, 2025); for any composer free in his creativity, the choice of means and ways of embodying his artistic concept is inherent. The composer has the right to turn to such centuries-old, symbolic sound sequences embedded in the consciousness of listeners, such as the descending bass (Shea, 2020), or to reject certain instrumental timbres as not corresponding to the composer's concept (Huron et al., 2014). Essentially, it is precisely in the "golden period" of "Rainbow" that Blackmore creates a completely unique style of performing a musical work on the guitar, meeting the highest standards.

It would seem, Ritchie has found himself – he composes and plays very good music that is personally interesting to him and does it incredibly well. But life is a complicated thing, and Ritchie Blackmore's personality is a very complex personality. The group's compositions were highly valued and are still valued by music critics, records sold, tickets were bought up, but still the popularity and commercial effect, especially in the United States, were far from the success of "Deep Purple" in the early 1970s. Many fans of "Smoke on the Water" simply did not understand (and did not accept) either the refined lyrics or the

complex polyphony of the compositions of the mature Ritchie Blackmore.

Blackmore was not entirely satisfied with this state of affairs. And he planned to make the fourth album simpler, without at all intending to step on the throat of his own song. "There is nothing wrong or inferior in simplicity per se. Simple music can be very good". (Note that if we talk about resolving the conflict "generativity versus stagnation", here, along with obvious commercial motives, there is concern for the audience, including those not distinguished by high intellectual and aesthetic demands, while maintaining the quality of the product offered). It was precisely because of this intention to "commercialize" the "Rainbow" repertoire that Dio, according to him, left the group. Blackmore, at the instigation of Roger Glover, with whom he began to collaborate again, finds a very strong vocalist, Graham Bonnet, and in 1979 a new album, "Down to Earth", is released. The lyrics were simple and understandable for mass consciousness – mainly simple stories about relationships. But the music, close to popular "dance" genres, turned out to be, apparently, insufficiently simple. As a result, this very solid, in our opinion, much underrated by critics album, although not unnoticed, still did not bring the desired success.

And here the first signs of a creative crisis appear in Ritchie Blackmore. In 1980, he parts with Bonnet (because of a haircut, which generally looks very much like a regression to teenage maximalism and peremptoriness), and after that his interest in "Rainbow" clearly weakens. He does not seek a replacement for Bonnet – the producers do that. When Blackmore was offered to listen to a recording of another

candidate – Joe Lynn Turner – his first reaction was: "I'm not interested. I'm tired of all these vocalists". In the end, he was persuaded, and Turner became the next frontman of the group. Blackmore invariably speaks well of Turner, but does not express particular enthusiasm for his vocal abilities, emphasizing rather that he is "a great guy". With Turner's participation, three more albums were recorded with rehashes of the same invariably popular motifs – love, happy and not so happy, meetings, breakups, etc. The musical compositions are solid, abundantly decorated with Ritchie's signature solos, but by and large – routine. Nothing like the breakthrough ideas and their implementation of the project's early years.

Of course, Blackmore understood the problem and apparently saw no further prospects for working in this format. It explains his agreement to participate in the re-creation of "Deep Purple" in the legendary "Mark II" lineup. In 1984, the new old group gathers and begins to work. The first album "Perfect Strangers" in Blackmore's opinion turned out "quite good", but the next one, "The House of Blue Light", turned out to be "outright hackwork". "We were all very lazy, including me. There were practically no new ideas". A quite exhaustive statement of a creative crisis, isn't it? Then an indistinct "gray" period begins – another departure of Gillan who, according to Blackmore, "finally soured", his replacement by the same Turner, the recording of another indistinct album, the return of Gillan... In the end, in 1993, Blackmore once again, this time finally,

leaves "Deep Purple". He leaves in the middle of a concert tour, which certainly must have cost him substantial financial losses, but something much more valuable was at stake — "it couldn't go on like this. I felt like I was selling my soul".

The protracted creative crisis, judging by all accounts, was merely the most obvious manifestation of a much deeper crisis, so to speak, a second edition or an exacerbation of a protracted identity crisis. Blackmore directly testifies to this. In a 1993 interview, he frankly stated: "I still don't know who I am and where I'm going". Consistent with this statement is his assessment of his own activities given there: "I still haven't said anything, but someday I will". For all the self-criticism and even quite palpable depressive nature of these statements, the objective results of Ritchie Blackmore's activity from the point of view of resolving the basic conflict of the seventh stage of psychosocial development at that time look very impressive. Above we have already mentioned his readiness and ability to understand and accept the needs of the not most demanding and, let's face it, not his favorite part of the audience — to take care of it. But even more vividly, Blackmore's generativity manifested itself in the professional sphere.

Ritchie Blackmore never gave guitar lessons — "I do not master the instrument well enough and am not as confident as guitar school teachers". But many of the most famous guitarists of the next generation — Yngwie Malmsteen, Steve Vai, and others, often ranking higher than Blackmore in all sorts of "lists", tell how much they were inspired by his music and unique performance technique. As we

noted above, many musicians who worked directly with him largely owe their careers to him. Who was David Coverdale before Ritchie listened to his promo? A shop assistant. Ronnie James Dio and his group "Elf" earned money at warm-ups. Joe Lynn Turner eked out a "career" as an unemployed musician. Not just the name, but communication and interaction with Blackmore allowed them to become stars of the music show business.

But let us return to Ritchie Blackmore. His attempts to say something immediately after refusing to "sell his soul", frankly speaking, are not impressive. He tries to breathe new life into "Rainbow", recruits new musicians, records another album that did not enjoy particular success with either the public or critics. At the group's live performances, there are still sold-out crowds, but the public increasingly obviously comes for the "living legend of rock and roll". Ritchie is still magnificent as a performer and a showman, but it is unlikely that this role brought him satisfaction (he himself categorically denied his "legendary" status). In general, everything looks rather dull and smacks of hopelessness. And then another happy chance arises in Blackmore's life.

In 1989, 18-year-old fashion model Candice Night, who collaborated with some, either near-music or just glamour magazine, came to a football match involving Ritchie Blackmore to interview him. Apparently, Ritchie's team won — he was in a good mood, and the interview took place. She asked for an autograph. He invited her to a restaurant. The most banal story of a rock star meeting another young

fan. But the result of this acquaintance turned out to be far from banal.

The stars, once again, aligned in Ritchie Blackmore's life. In Candice Night, he found not only a wife, the mother of his children, but also a true friend, partner, and like-minded person. At the time of their acquaintance, Candice was not just a girl with a striking appearance; she was born and raised in an intelligent family, received a good, including musical, education. Upon learning of their daughter's relationship with a famous rock musician almost 25 years her senior, her parents were shocked. As Candice recounts, her mother, a teacher, met with Blackmore and they "talked about something for a very long time. I still don't know about – probably about his intentions". Apparently, Blackmore's intentions seemed quite worthy and convincing to Candice's mother – from that moment on, the parents did not object to their daughter's relationship with Ritchie, also to her accompanying him on world tours.

With the appearance of Candice in Blackmore's life, the crisis of psychosocial development "intimacy versus isolation" receives a final positive resolution. "He always had a very good relationship with my parents. I think that after many years of wandering around the world and loneliness, he liked being part of a big family"⁶. But the "big family" of the mature Ritchie Blackmore was not limited to close relatives. With the emergence of the creative union "Blackmore's Night", he

began to perceive his audience in a completely special way. "The people at our shows are like friends who came to our home for a party, whom we ask: well, what would you like us to play? After the concert, we usually go to some pub with part of the audience – we drink, talk, sing songs without any equipment"⁷.

Blackmore's generativity as a creator was also clearly manifested in his care for the audience. With the beginning of the "Blackmore's Night" project, with the radicalism characteristic of the young Ritchie, he made several public statements that he was tired of rock and roll, that this music was limited, that it simply "allows paying the bills", and that in general he was hanging the "Stratocaster" on the wall. Fans of "Deep Purple" and "Rainbow" were shocked – talk began along the lines of "he traded us for a woman", that his young girlfriend made him take up all this medieval music. Commenting on these rumors, Candice laughs: "These people have no idea who Ritchie Blackmore is. It's simply impossible to make him do anything".

It should be mentioned that on the first two albums of "Blackmore's Night", the electric guitar is indeed practically absent. But then Blackmore clearly realized that his legendary riffs were missed not only by aging "beer drinkers" stuck forever in the four notes of "Smoke on the Water", but also by people who truly understand and appreciate his music. And he takes the "Stratocaster" off the wall. Subsequent albums and performances of the group

⁶URL:
<https://youtu.be/LlixYMoJG6g?is=a0KRc9BMXsG ojF1P> (accessed: 15.03.2026).

⁷URL:
https://youtu.be/4zodqKkRBUM?is=v9c_QZ2aEnh 326UG (accessed: 15.03.2026).

feature original compositions with Blackmore's signature solos, covers of songs not only from "Deep Purple" and "Rainbow", but also famous hits of other rock groups of the early 1970s, in particular "Lady in Black" by "Uriah Heep". Moreover, in 2015, at Candice's instigation, Blackmore re-creates "Rainbow" in another new lineup (now he is not annoyed by the short haircut of vocalist Ronnie Romero, nor the punk "quiff" of drummer David Keith), and in 2016–17 he gives several concerts. At the same time, he emphasized that this was only a response to the nostalgia of fans, and by no means a change of priorities: "It's always fun to rock on the 'Strat,' but the main thing for me remains 'Blackmore's Night' and Renaissance music"⁸.

But the main thing that happened in Ritchie Blackmore's life with the appearance of Candice Night at the intrapersonal level was something else – he clearly found the final answers to the questions "who am I" and where and why he is going. In creative terms, a final choice was made in favor of the music of the European Middle Ages and the Renaissance. And here Candice's influence clearly took place. It was expressed not in the fact that she forced Blackmore to make such a choice, but in the fact that she apparently sincerely shared his fascination not only with music, but also with the culture and way of life of these periods of European history in general.

Having made a choice, Blackmore approached the matter with his

characteristic thoroughness and perfectionism. He looks for a professional teacher to play ancient string instruments. When it turned out that there were none in principle (at least in the space-time continuum convenient for Ritchie), he begins to study intensively on his own. As a result, another manifestation of the childhood vitality of the mature Ritchie Blackmore was revealed – the talent not only of a multi-instrumentalist virtuoso, but also of a researcher of medieval musical culture, a popularizer, and a reconstructor. After all, no one today knows how the songs of minstrels and troubadours actually sounded in medieval castles and town squares – no recordings have survived. Blackmore managed not to recreate, but to create this amazing atmosphere on albums and especially in live performances of "Blackmore's Night". Candice contributed to this. She also independently mastered ancient folk wind instruments – shawms, chalumeaus, rauschpfeifen, etc. Moreover, she mastered them quite professionally – in many compositions she uses them not just as a stylistic illustration to her vocals, but performs quite valuable, independent parts.

As a result, a creative tandem was formed with a clear "division of labor" – Blackmore writes the music, Night writes the lyrics. The tandem, which has existed for almost 30 years now, has proven to be extraordinarily productive – 11 albums have been released (the last in 2021), many singles, live recordings, and a number of videos (previously Blackmore categorically

⁸URL:

https://youtu.be/4zodqKkRBUm?is=v9c_QZ2aEnh326UG (accessed: 15.03.2026).

refused to do it – "I'm a musician, not an actor"); until recently, the group constantly toured, mainly in Europe.

Musical ideas, compositions, and interpretations are again "pouring" out of Ritchie. But these are already different ideas, much more complex than the most complex guitar riffs – they reflect the true identity of the authentic Ritchie Blackmore. "If you try to play too technically, you lose something in the music – as if you're playing for another guitarist. I like to play for people. I think about the guitar last when I write. The most important thing for me is the vocals, then the arrangement, then the song. And yes, there should be a guitar solo. But for many players, everything revolves around the solo".

This credo is clearly embodied in the compositions of "Blackmore's Night". Blackmore's performance position radically changes – he often "fades into the background", acting as an accompanist to Candice's heartfelt vocals. Even solo fragments have become an organic part of the polyphonic sound of the group (to which he constantly attracts violinists, backing vocalists, bagpipers, etc.) as a first-class orchestra. In the second part of the live performance of the composition "All for One", Blackmore's virtuoso solo on the "Stratocaster" serves as a backdrop to the thunderous roar of bagpipes. In this new approach, realized with "Blackmore's Night", Ritchie, in our opinion, fully realized another maxim he had voiced earlier: "The music must be good and well performed".

Over time, along with his fascination with the "majestic music of the Renaissance", Blackmore develops an

interest in the folk musical culture of European countries. Touring with the group, he buys records with recordings of musical folklore, later using them for arrangements in the "Blackmore's Night" style. For example, the group's repertoire included compositions written on the musical themes of Russian folk songs "Polyushko Pole" and "Vinovata li Ya", as well as an original composition on a Russian theme, "Run My Troika, Run". Apparently, the intuitively felt by the musician, diagnosed by modern equipment, universal human striving for musical harmony (Shanahan, Huron, 2011) has an attractive effect.

In 2005, Ritchie Blackmore turns 60 – he enters the final stage of the life cycle, according to the psychosocial theory of personality development. But he clearly does not think about summing up. Instead, in 2008, he formalizes his official marriage to Candice, and in 2010 their first child is born – daughter Autumn. Their professional activity is in full bloom. Two years later, a son is born – Rory.

However, as a person by all indications who has already achieved integrity, Blackmore begins to realize his childhood vitality in new, completely uncharacteristic forms. Having found his true "I", living and creating in harmony with himself, people, and the world, Ritchie suddenly becomes, by his standards, extremely sociable. Touring with "Blackmore's Night", he gives an unimaginable number of interviews; later, at the instigation of his wife, he masters the genre of internet streams with his audience. And here another completely unpredictable talent of Blackmore is revealed – the talent of an extremely

interesting, profound conversationalist and storyteller. In a disarmingly leisurely manner, with an invariable "poker face" and signature sense of humor, Blackmore willingly answers questions, talks about himself, meetings with famous and not-so-famous people, and reflects on music, life, and the "eternal" questions that concern him and others.

But time is powerful even over the ever-young Ritchie Blackmore. He clearly perceives this fact with the wisdom, calmness, and confidence of a person fully aware of the significance of what he has done, is doing, and will still do. Thus, ten years ago, answering a question about when he would be seen on stage again, with a good dose of self-irony, he outlined the objective circumstances: "Everything will depend on how I feel. After all, I'm already 71. My teeth hurt, my legs hurt, my back hurts, my ears are falling off. I don't want to play furniture on stage; I'm not interested in that".

This year Ritchie Blackmore turned 81. He still lives in "Minstrel Hall", surrounded by his beloved wife, children, cats, tapestries, and a collection of antique weapons. He continues to communicate with fans (on his birthday, with Candice as host and operator, he released almost a three-hour stream). He continues to practice his beloved music (according to Candice, it truly helps him cope with ailments). In recent years, Candice Night, certainly with her husband's support, has released two solo albums. Will the 81-year-old Ritchie Blackmore surprise us with any other unexpected manifestation of his inexhaustible childhood vitality? Who knows? Life goes on.

Conclusion

The use of Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory in the study of personality and creativity significantly expands the interdisciplinary approach of the biographical method. Erikson's theory of developmental stages allows the integration of psychological, cultural, and musical aspects, creating a holistic understanding of the process of individual development of talented individuals. Through the prism of life conflicts and inner vitality, it becomes clear that the development of creative potential is not only a matter of professional skills but also the result of the interaction of a person's internal resources with the external environment throughout life. Innate, genetically determined qualities – the so-called childhood vitality – form the basis for further development and make it possible to understand the mechanism unique abilities manifest in outstanding musicians such as Richard Blackmore. This approach helps explain individual differences and identifies the conditions that promote the realization of inner potential in various cultural and socio-historical contexts. Thus, Erikson's theory becomes a powerful tool for interdisciplinary research, uniting psychology, sociology, cultural studies, and music, and ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of personality development and creative abilities. Taken together, these approaches expand the possibilities of biographical analysis and also help identify universal mechanisms of human development applicable to a wide range of humanities and practice.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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