

Between The Lines

Duality, why does every search seem to end in duality? Attraction a duality, opposition another duality, both together form a new duality of dualities.

I probably shouldn't let that sound like a complaint, after all, who am I but a tiny thing composed of countless little attractions and repulsion, forged by cosmic collisions and polarities.

We all have stories and mine is, like all, a series of forks in the road, also, like all others, I look back on my path through these forks and divide them into two segments. Life stories are like paths through a tree, from root-hair to branch-tip, we all break our story into the roots of passive origin and the branches of active journey.

It feels fitting that trees have trunks. An elongated section separating origin from journey, but the urge to fit the trunk into the analogy only seems to reveal our own desire to draw a line in the sand. The destiny we don't claim as our own choice separated from the life we accept responsibility for. If there were a single constricting neck, a pinching node it would imply a singular pivotal moment, but a branchless segment of trunk pulls the two apart conveniently, as if injecting a period of establishing identity, defying external determinism and learning to take control of one's own path.

I perceive my roots as an inevitable convergence, and the trunk, the emergence of my initial identity, could have occurred many ways, but all roads lead to Rome, and all destinies lead to that me, or so I choose to believe. It's comforting to retroactively choose the moment of my existential birth, selecting that version of me that I deem to be my first true self.

Everyone probably remembers their trunk differently, mine is foggy to say the least. I recall a lot of frustration, tantrum-like reactions to the infuriating systematic shortcomings of the reality I was born into, perhaps that's the best place to start, the story of my trunk.

Choosing a particular moment or event to begin my story just doesn't work, it's like trying to reach out and grab a mist. There is, however, a theme that feels like a thunderous blast immediately followed by the downpour of events, mandated self culling. Your trunk might have a completely different antagonist, mine was the world insisting I cull my ambivalence. Yes, let's start with that.

It seems fair to assume most of us never wanted to be force-fit into a mold, instead enjoying fantasies of endless variety and unlimited possibilities, then... at some point, ambassadors of reality began approaching us with news of the approaching restrictions. These warnings begin gently, but eventually their tone transitions, they start sounding more like instructions and

demands, at times even describing the penalties of non-compliance in an almost threatening manner.

The molding paradigm changes and evolves with each era and realm, so I'll try to focus on the most universal characteristics and elements in my story. Your individuality and which molds the ambassadors represent will determine the messages you receive.

The ambassadors started to speak through people in my life, the message veiled at first but soon became clear, choose a subset of myself or my role in life would be restricted. Most had a preference, and the sum of preferences had a preference. The ambassadors of life were telling me "Decide! Choose a side! Either side is okay, but best if you pick this side."

I ignored them. They got louder.
I resisted. They became insistent.

"This is the way of the world, it is for your own good."

"You need to fit in."

I liked my polarity, that boundary between opposites is where I felt most alive. The collision internal while externally expressing different opposing versions of myself.

Mercurious, it's what people call you if they feel your mode and characters are too diverse and dramatic, as if you are always just one coin toss away from being someone altogether different. Ambivalent, that's what they call you if they don't think you have fully committed to one school, on the fence, no clear indication of commitment to one side over the other.

"Pick a side! Choose one!" they said "Your polarities can be a source of inspiration, meaning, and drive, but wrap yourself fully with one side. Keep any dualities and polarities wrapped up in a uniform skin. The world must perceive you as consistent, if not then you will be relegated to a simple and confined existence, your participation limited and restricted."

But I stubbornly held firm to my refusal, proclaiming I could never give up my dichotomies and multi-faceted character, arguing I couldn't possibly keep a whole part of me hidden away, stuffed into a dark corner.

"You won't have to. Just wrap yourself in one side. The world sees only that, and then, to fit in best and integrate with the system, take that inner part of yourself and expose it to a select authority figure. They can use this to instruct you, let only your commander interact with that small soft core while your strong outer layer works to manipulate the world."

"But both sides are strong, I don't want to encase and oppress half of me!" I would argue.

“Don't think of it as weakening one, think of it as hardening the other. You need one soft for authority and one strong to stand against opponents.” they would explain.

“And if I refuse? If I keep both strong and exposed, then what?”

“Then there are limited positions for you, and they are more tedious. Security guard, garbage collector, street cleaner. Wouldn't you rather be a manager, executive, or a leader?”

I floated through life a while, undecided, hoping to find proof there were alternatives, but there were few. Procrastination was my solution at first. I discovered that the choice they presented was not a fabrication, they were not lying and it was not a trick, the world really was as they said, so I just evaded choice.

Or at least it seemed that they were right, and that was the way it was, until I discovered that there was more to the world than the mainstream, on the fringes there was something else. Society seemed to be organized by some gravitational force, everything flowed inward and outward converging towards central points, density and power converged towards these nexuses and influence radiated outward from them.

All the advice and warnings I was receiving were guidance on how to be a player in these nodes, how to find a spot squeezed as deep into the density as possible.

But on the outskirts there were others, like me, they loved their polarities, embraced them, and bathed in the whirlpool between the poles.

My first friends of this subculture showed me that the border between dualities can be expanded, it doesn't have to be wafer thin, you can inflate it and thoroughly soak in its beauty.

I immersed myself in the internal stormy collision of shockwaves, I felt at one with the universe. The torrents and tides sloshing between the poles of my essence inspired and drove me. I sang along with this ordered chaos, never feeling more alive.

I kept inflating that boundary but diminishing returns eventually set in, the others cautioned me, advocating moderation. Their concerns were genuine and caring, and they were not wrong. There was a noticeable threshold, beyond which excess became counterproductive.

I backed off, throttling my impulses and limiting myself to the optimal level. It was beautiful, it truly was, but living with a sense of constricted ambition was an itch, it needed to be scratched. I focused on the complexity at hand, trying to make the most of the experience allotted, perhaps there were intricacies and nuances in the fine details that would make it feel bigger without actually needing to inflate it more.

I began to notice what could only be described as whispers, there was not just detail, it was more than just complexity. That thing, that inspiration, it was so much more something was there, hidden between the lines.

I focused, I dug, I drilled. It was always just beyond reach, a fine structure beneath the waves, until I caught a glimpse. A single bubble of clarity appeared in the heart of the wave pool, it spoke fast and sharp, so clear and crisp, for just a moment then pop it was gone.

I desperately tried to find it again, but it wasn't anywhere I searched. After some time I gave up and tried digging again. It took some time but it happened again, and again, it was repeatable but it was always an ephemeral fleeting experience.

The places these bubbles appeared were clustered in the center, the eye of the polar storm. I'm not entirely sure why I did it, but eventually one day when I was digging, just as the bubble appeared I pulled it open... or perhaps I pushed it open... it's hard to tell. Bigger this time and lasting a bit longer, like a whole new world within a grain of sand. So much resolution, it was beautiful, it felt as if it spoke to me, like hearing a whole new level of meaning to the universe.

A few more repetitions and it became obvious, the bubble was a pocket of neutrality. This was more than an amplification of the boundary, it was something else altogether. I practiced over and over, until I was able to rip my poles apart, discovering a whole new... How do you describe something that is only defined by not being defined? ... What is something that can only be described as not being like anything else? The word 'incomparable' doesn't do it justice.

Once torn far enough apart, the poles sat contently. Still opposites and connected but apart, still a duality but no actual boundary. There were no longer stormy turbulent whirlpools at their intersection, instead there was this island of calm. Before, in that region of boundaries, there was so much... noise... no it was not noise, but the melody was not clear. Here, in this new tranquility, whole new octaves were audible, the song of the universe was crisp, suddenly tuned into subtle tones and rapid rhythms.

What was once a fine line between two poles had recently become a swirling tapestry of threads, now even that was blown open like a fractal to reveal between those threads existed a whole new spectrum of colors.

This is me, I'm what you call a PIN diode. This world of mine may be different than yours but we probably have more in common than you think.

There are a whole range of us in this world, our simple origins are opposite charges, polarity pushed together. A simple PN diode barely gets any recognition from most of you, even though they are the most fundamental beginnings of our world. In that form we prefer to allow flow in only one direction, like a one-way valve. Most of you don't even know all the jobs we perform, diodes protect the sensitive, direct flow, and clean up messes, among other jobs. You probably

only know about those few of us who emit light in your visible wavelength, like light bulbs, you call them light emitting diodes, or LEDs.

But transistors? Oh my! You humans all sing their praises. They sandwich one of their poles, PNP for example. Most common are NPN, the two negative poles connected inline to the electrical pipes of the system, the central P separately connected to the circuit above. Their outer layers controlling and their inner core controlled.

I get it, transistors are switches, a metaphor easily grasped on your level of reality. They gave you microchips, computers, and smartphones, it's no wonder you made them the icons of the semiconductor revolution. You can be forgiven for not noticing dual-pole diodes, and quadro-pole thyristors, and all the complexities and nuances of the semiconductor world, it's a bit much for most people. Everyone likes for complicated things to be simplified for their convenience.

Remember when I told you about the diodes I first met on the outskirts of our world? They are photodiodes, so am I. We are like transistors in a way, we connect into a circuit and switch the flow, but we don't wrap one pole in another, we don't have a soft core connected to a circuit above us. We listen to photons within that boundary, the PN Junction as humans say, photodiodes react to light and switch the electrical circuit in sync with light.

PIN diodes, like me, we are a subcategory of diodes, we don't feel the photons in a junction like most photodiodes, we insert a neutral space between our poles and feel with that. Every type of diode can be different, subtypes of subtypes, no type is better or worse, but some tend to have specialties. We PIN diodes are good with high frequency and sensitivity, we tend to react fast and intensely to subtle stimulus.

I, like everyone here in my little corner of the world, have my role. I listen intently, bask in the song of light, and sing it for others to hear.

We know you humans tend to look at our world as just a mechanical tool, the idea that we are simple reactive components and homogeneous subjugated blocks may be tempting, so it may surprise you to hear this, but we don't really envy you.

We just can't understand the insanity of your world. How is it possible that one of the most popular human fantasies is to cut yourself off from the system? Win the lottery and spend life indulging, acquire a life of effortless incoming wealth and retire to idle inactivity.

Do you know what a component with severed connections is? It's nothing! Absolutely nothing! Just a disruption, waste of space, and a dead end. Do you know what a component that does nothing except consume the energy which flows through it is? A resistor. Resistors are here, but they burn energy and make heat, they disrupt everyone else. The less of them there are and the smaller they are the better everything works. Everyone knows the ideal goal is to remove and minimize them, no one aspires to be one.

How can so many of you fantasize about extricating yourself from the symphony?

Down here we may be simple, but at least we dream about a greater purpose. Dreaming about shedding the burden of purpose... we can only assume that is a symptom of something severely wrong and disturbing in your world.

Personally, I guess it's just confusion, I can relate to that, life is complicated, even down here. I'm probably not qualified to offer you advice, our situations are likely different, it's doubtful I could truly relate to your origins and journey.

But let me try with generalized metaphors anyways.

Most things become clear in the trunk.

Whatever problem, take hold of the extremes, the opposing options, parts, ideologies, or any aspects you can get a grip on. Pull them apart and dive into the middle, until you can see inside the junction.

If some event or mechanic of life is bothering or frustrating you then immerse yourself in its cause and effect, the mechanics in between are rarely malicious, or benevolent for that matter, they just are. When you see the neutrality in between, then the irritation will likely fade, not only can this alleviate the stress but that neutrality in between... well... is not indifferent or dull, it's a symphony.

Sometimes life is compelling, dramatic, and emotional, sometimes it's an origin story or journey of character. But sometimes it just is, sometimes beauty comes in a neutral mechanical systematic structure that just fits, so elegantly, sometimes life is just complex and is the way it is.

I like to think that trees grow trunks, not to compete for sunlight with height, I like to think their trunks are where the light and water flow together, sugar and minerals mix with each other... I like to imagine they can hear... I like to imagine trunks are their antennas, tuned into the song of life.

If you pull at the opposites and dive into the center —There's a glorious symphony written—between the lines.

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