

Both Sides Now – a musing by John

Duality dilemmas

Recently, I was corresponding with a [friend](#) when she reminded me of the [Taoist parable](#): *The old man lost his horse (but it all turned out for the best)*. It is about how an event that initially seems to be the result of bad luck can eventually prove to be a blessing in disguise. The parable teaches us to refrain from judgment based on superficial appearances; rather, we are better advised to remain humbly poised amidst uncertainty in the awareness that *even the very wise cannot see all ends*, a statement made by Gandalf to help Frodo see that even a creature as loathsome as Gollum might somehow eventually contribute to the greater good, even if unwittingly. We should err on the side of forbearance.



The parable reminded me that the dilemmas posed by pairs of opposites requiring a choice of action or a moral stance – often without full awareness of circumstances or consequences – are a central feature of our experience in this density. *Do I turn this way or that? Is this a good thing or a bad thing?* According to [the teachings of Ra](#), our manifold experiences in third density are meant to culminate in a definitive choice between *a path of self-service* and *a path of other-service*, a choice which governs our fate for ages to come.

But Ra also teaches that to graduate from this density, we must reach a state of poise at the balance point of all dualities, such that we are no longer swayed one way or the other by any external catalyst. Does this not imply indifference to choices between opposites, passively sitting on the proverbial fence? On the contrary, Ra explicitly warns against the sinkhole of indifference. How, then, do we reconcile the balancing of opposites with the necessity of a definitive choice between the two poles of a dichotomy? The answer is *sovereignty*.

Sovereignty

Those who have attained sovereignty are no longer victims of circumstances beyond their control, buffeted this way and that by external forces they do not fully comprehend. Rather, they are masters of their own destiny. Their choices are deliberate expressions of their sovereign being rather than knee-jerk reactions or socially programmed responses. In other words, the tables have turned: circumstances conform to their will. How is such mastery achieved? By grappling with duality dilemmas during the third density experience.

To illustrate the grappling process, consider the challenge of balancing something on your fingertip – a ball, for example. At first, the task seems impossible. The ball seems to have a will of its own to tip left or right, forward or backward. As it tips, you react by moving in the direction the ball is falling so as to catch up with it. But you overreact and now the ball is falling in the opposite direction with even greater acceleration. Despite your frantic efforts, the tipping increases in amplitude until you can no longer catch up with the ball and it falls to the ground.

But with intense focus and much practice, your sensitivity increases, your reaction time decreases and you



gain finer control over your movements. Eventually, you can balance the ball with ease. You can keep it so still that it appears motionless or, you can guide it effortlessly in whatever direction you choose as if it is an extension of your arm.

The ball is the same as it always was. Gravity is the same. What has changed is your sense of self. You have used feedback from your environment to consciously develop rapport with it and then to become one with it, at least as far as the ball and the forces acting on it. Do you see now how stillness is not stasis, but rather is the result of highly frequent and very fine micro-adjustments, a dynamic balance of opposites achieved through full presence of being – a state filled with potency. Sovereignty is the state of having command over this potency, whether potentials are expressed or not.

The road to sovereignty

To repeat: the quest for sovereignty necessarily involves grappling with the duality dilemma. My personal quest began when I first heard the song [*Both Sides Now*](#) by Joni Mitchell in 1967. The lyrics:

*Rows and flocks of angel hair
And ice cream castles in the air
And feather canyons everywhere
I've looked at clouds that way*

*But now they only block the sun
They rain and snow on everyone
So many things I would have done
But clouds got in my way*

*I've looked at clouds from both sides now
From up and down, and still somehow
It's cloud illusions I recall
I really don't know clouds at all*

*Moons and Junes and Ferris wheels
The dizzy dancing way you feel
As every fairy tale comes real
I've looked at love that way*

*But now it's just another show
You leave 'em laughing when you go
And if you care, don't let them know
Don't give yourself away*

*I've looked at love from both sides now
From give and take, and still somehow
It's love's illusions I recall
I really don't know love at all*

*Tears and fears and feeling proud
To say "I love you" right out loud
Dreams and schemes and circus crowds
I've looked at life that way*

*But now old friends are acting strange
They shake their heads, they say I've changed
Well something's lost, but something's gained
In living every day*

*I've looked at life from both sides now
From win and lose and still somehow
It's life's illusions I recall
I really don't know life at all*

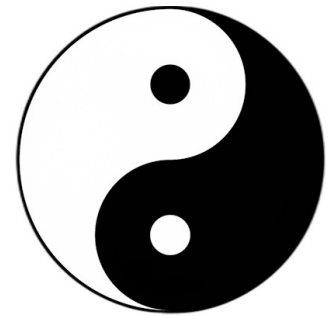
*I've looked at life from both sides now
From up and down and still somehow
It's life's illusions I recall
I really don't know life at all*



Joni Mitchell

Joni's profound lyrics launched me into a lifelong quest to understand their deeper meaning. At such a young age, she had already humbly acknowledged her ignorance and embraced the mystery of life's great dramas. This is the first step toward sovereignty.

The second step, as her lyrics poetically illustrate, is a kind of pattern recognition: noticing that the myriad of dualities – including clouds, love, and life – are all just different forms of an abstract duality so elegantly symbolized by the taijitu, the yin-yang symbol. So much truth is captured in this simple image; not only are seemingly mutually-exclusive opposites depicted as being unified by an encompassing wholeness, but there is a dynamic interplay between them: one spawns the other in an eternal yet timeless dance, revealing their underlying unity.



This recognition is a major step toward the awareness of the oneness of all that is. All dualities are concrete forms of the abstract duality including the up/down and win/lose dualities of the song, the good/bad luck duality of the parable and a special interest of mine, the order/chaos duality which accounts for complexity as distinct from mere complication. All such forms are opportunities to attain sovereignty by practicing balance, and *balance is the cardinal rule of magic*.

Joni even incorporated the third step toward sovereignty into her song by including the word **now** in the song's title and in its refrain: *both sides now*. All duality dilemmas are resolved in the still center of being, which exists in the timeless now about which illusory opposites swirl in their eternal dance.

Expansion of identity through love

This balance point, this presence of being in the present moment, in the here and now, is a third point of reference, a third perspective: it is a point of intersection with another realm, the metaphysical realm of being which is adjacent to the familiar physical realm of doings, the realm from where our sovereignty emanates. At this point, one's sense of self may encompass *both sides now* as part of one's being.

This binding of both sides to one's self, expanding one's identity in the process, is accomplished by the agglutinizing force of love, which is contained in the **now** moment. Ra instructs us to seek love in this moment. The finding of it empowers binding. With each finding and binding, binding power doubles, resulting an exponential expansion of self toward All That Is achieved through balancing self-love with Self-Love, the finite with the Infinite.

The present is the point of power. – Seth

...who can know when an entity will open the gate to the present? – Ra

The bid for freedom

Indeed, as implied by **now**, even the future/past temporal duality is just another duality dilemma. And if we make a leap of generalization and symmetry, we recognize that just as the spatial duality manifests as a triplet in the physical realm (up/down, left/right and forward/backward – and there is a reason why there are exactly three spatial dimensions), so also does the temporal duality manifest in the metaphysical realm, opening to sovereign beings the freedom to traverse timelines. Having balanced time, we can even chose to move sideways in time at will. The bid for sovereignty is also a bid for freedom.

The great dance

Becoming sovereign is simply a matter of recognizing who we are, in truth; of identifying first with our being rather than our doings. And this usually involves intermittently disengaging from external dramas, retreating from the outer physical plane of duality, the plain of doings, into the inner metaphysical realm of being to integrate into our being lessons gleaned from the physical reality mirror, to be followed by another foray into the outer realm with the intention of further expanding our identity.

This being/doing duality interplay is just another form of the great abstraction, a dance between the metaphysical (or spiritual) and the physical (or material) realms. The word *spiritual* means *invisible to our physical senses* in this context. Our being resides in the metaphysical-spiritual realm and so may also be called our spirit dual. The aim dancing with one's spirit dual is to forge oneness with it; dancing develops rapport and culminates in union.

One's doings become sovereign expressions of one's being. No longer are they driven by the often misguided ambitions of one's immature masculine (yang) intellect, which is ever lacking sufficient information to apply his reason to (even if reason were not an inherently flawed tool of assessment and decision-making), estranged from his feminine (yin) spirit counterpart with her empathetic feeling nature, intuitive guidance system, moral compass and inherent power to manifest and therefore, by default, relying on crude manipulation to achieve his questionable ends, inevitably creating wreckage and accruing karma in the process.

In a formal dance, one partner leads and the other follows until a such a degree of rapport is achieved that the lead/follow duality dissolves: *the two become one*. When it comes to developing rapport with our spirit dual, our intellect-centered ego consciousness, which actively manages our affairs in the material realm, must take the lead, for the material realm of doings is of the masculine principle and therefore active relative to the reactive, feminine spiritual realm of being. By uniting with our spirit dual, we gain access to a direct connection to Divinity by way of our soul, which is the essence of our spirit dual and a facet of the Supreme Being. As a unified sovereign being we may then seek rapport with Divinity-Infinity, with the ultimate aim of apotheosis.



Apotheosis

Only an integrated spiritual-material being has sufficient internal cohesion (feminine self-love) and focus (masculine personal intent) to mirror Divinity, to be a suitable dance partner, to beckon rapport. The Construct consisting of the physical/metaphysical dual realms is just a forge for the development of such beings. Having achieved the sovereign freedom of the totality of our being, we may then take a feminine stance relative to Divine Masculine Intent (Intelligent Infinity in Ra's lexicon, the Active Side of Infinity in Castaneda's lexicon), surrendering to His lead, developing a rapport which leads to union:

Intent is not something one might use or command or move in any way — nevertheless, one could use it, command it, or move it as one desires. — Don Juan Matus

Again, the lead/follow, masculine/feminine duality dissolves when we merge with Divinity. This potential is our birthright as children of Creation, but Divine Feminine Will requires of us to forge ourselves into sovereign beings and, having won our freedom, to use it if we so chose to beckon Divine Intent, acquiescing to Him in order to claim our inheritance.

Afterword

The above musing is a distillation of a recently completed trilogy called *Metamusings*, in homage to my muses, my spirit family, in the form of freely downloadable PDFs and MP3s hosted on [Github](#).

A quarter century ago, I was introduced to the Ra Material by a healer named Neil who is briefly mentioned in the series. Ra's emphasis on duality as a manifestation of oneness (e.g. love/light, space/time, teaching/learning) became one of the pillars of my edifice of understanding, although I prefer to describe the definitive choice as between *rapport* and *rivalry* rather than *other-service* and *self-service* as per Ra, and I see the choice for rapport as a choice for balance *within* heart whereas rivalry is a choice for balance *excluding* heart. Although this is a choice between the poles of a dichotomy from the point of view of spiritual aspirants, it is a duality in the context of Creation. The two paths balance one another, merging in the unity density.

