

On the Great Dance

I

[DIAGNOSTIC PROLEGOMENON]

This mortal existence we occupy is often likened to a game. If this is so, then it must have rules, incentives and optimal strategies (today referred to as 'metas'). Over time, the parameters of the game, along with the common cited strategies and effects of previous players, seem to impose vectors on the player. The result of interacting with these forces and being subject to their guidance eventually resembles a sort of socio-cognitive choreography.

This choreography is what I shall refer to as the Dance.

Firstly, I think it's only right that I introduce and explore the more famous philosophical interpretation of the Dance. Blood Meridian's Judge Holden, unlike most people who seldom choose neither if nor how to dance, fully embraces the dance but I would our understandings of the Dance are not the same.

Holden's understanding of the dance is as the expression of his most profane axiom: violence as the ultimate reality and final decider. War and killing eradicate wills with each person slain and only the living may cause effect. I cannot deny that in short-term conflict, force is the uncontested arbiter. I cannot even deny that the game of life often contains ritualised contests such as exams, sport competitions, applications for employment, and of course, war. However, I can, and do refute the notion that the Dance is life and its purpose. I do refute the immutability of this framework of calamity.

Holden, and others who hold such a belligerent world view, live only in the height of the Dance, at the climactic crescendo of the fiddle. Due to the finality of death, those who dance see its avoidance and/or delivery as the only goal in life. They are temporally and ontologically shallow beings who cannot see that whilst mortality is fleeting, ideas endure. They are akin to animals, dogs barking at the moon.

Make no mistake, my understanding includes that of Holden but takes it further. For the dance is not only about 2 men being reduced to one; it is the resultant vector of selfish optimisation & agency collapse emerging from conformity to default selection pressures.

Holden is not as wise as he thinks he is. He sees himself as the one, true master of the dance when really, he is the one, true slave.

It is my position that one cannot truly master the Dance; it is not a will in and of him itself that can be dominated. It is an emergent resultant 'modus operandi' born from society amplifying the "contest of wills".

Verily, verily nothing can truly compel us to capitulate to the dominant strategies and interpersonal arenas taught to and imposed on us. Control of our personhood and its manifestations in life are the

sole prerogative of every person and so we remain the sovereign of our experience, even if maintaining authority over your actions comes with a cost.

It may be rational and maybe even prudent in a purely biological lens to yield to carnal, default imperatives in a desperate attempt to satisfy basic needs and wants. However, surviving is not exactly interchangeable with living. If one chooses to truly live and not just persist, the way of the dance can never satisfy you.

Holden postulates that 'men are born for games' exclusively. His short-sightedness strikes again. Just as momentary determinism is superseded by the proliferation of notions, a man's teleological hunger often overrides frivolous exuberance and pleasure in the end. History is filled to bursting with examples of men and women who had to "lose" in order to ultimately win:

Nelson Mandela, Aaron Bushnell, Jeremy Corbyn, Socrates, Edward Snowden, and the most honoured and venerated lord of all things, Jesus Christ.

All of these examples transcended the axis of success that was default in their field and overcame the dance at cost to them. One refused subjugation and traded his freedom for his country's freedom. Another refused to be silent and traded comfortable ignorance for painful truth. The Greatest refused to abandon the creation that abandoned Him and traded ultimate invulnerability to be there for the vulnerable.

This is not something Holden can understand.

But the Kid does.

Although the Kid (then the Man) may have died but he died as sovereign of the way he lived.

A failure of survival but a victor of life.

But how is non-conformity to the Dance considered going beyond? What makes that choice anything more than a consolation prize for the weak and maladapted?

To be honest, for as long as I have rejected the dance I have wondered this. How do I know not engaging in retaliatory bullying was magnanimity and not cowardice? How do I know that forgiving those who damaged me is reconciliation and not conflict avoidance? How do I know that chasing absolute truth and not succumbing to in-groups is a proclamation of integrity and not ambivalence?

In this moment I feel convicted of a single notion...

Becoming unbound is the only way to truly win.

Those who engage in the Dance and follow its vectors can never master the dance. The Dance invariably masters you and self-perpetuates. As I earlier mentioned about Holden, those that profess faith in the Machiavellian, insidious way of the Dance are its slaves and will invariably be defeated as death is inevitable. According to their axis, cessation or suppression of the self-gratifying will constitutes defeat.

- *Those of the Dancing Way will be robbed of what they hold dear by the very same mechanism that gave it to them.*
- *Those of the Five Ways can never be robbed for their true treasure is logically theirs alone.*

It is the prerogative and imperative of those who go beyond.

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