

A Ladies' Introduction to Classical Philosophy

Lewis Carroll

“Did you ever make real life into a drama?” said the Earl. “Now just try. I’ve often amused myself that way. Consider this platform as our stage. Good entrances and exits on both sides, you see. Capital background scene: real engine moving up and down. All this bustle, and people passing to and fro, must have been most carefully rehearsed! How naturally they do it! With never a glance at the audience! And every grouping is quite fresh, you see. No repetition!”

It really was admirable, as soon as I began to enter into it from this point of view. Even a porter passing, with a barrow piled with luggage, seemed so realistic that one was tempted to applaud. He was followed by an angry mother, with hot red face, dragging along two screaming children, and calling, to some one behind, “John! Come on!” Enter John, very meek, very silent, and loaded with parcels. And he was followed, in his turn, by a frightened little nursemaid, carrying a fat baby, also screaming. All the children screamed.

“Capital byplay!” said the old man aside. “Did you notice the nursemaid’s look of terror? It was simply perfect!”

“You have struck quite a new vein,” I said. “To most of us Life and its pleasures seem like a mine that is nearly worked out.”

“Worked out!” exclaimed the Earl. “For any one with true dramatic instincts, it is only the Overture that is ended! The real treat has yet to begin. You go to a theatre, and pay your ten shillings for a stall, and what do you get for your money? Perhaps it’s a dialogue between a couple of farmers—unnatural in their overdone caricature of farmers’ dress—more unnatural in their constrained attitudes and gestures—most unnatural in their attempts at ease and geniality in their talk. Go instead and take a seat in a third-class railway-carriage, and you’ll get the same dialogue done to the life! Front-seats—no orchestra to block the view—and nothing to pay!”

People may tell you philosophy is just a game played with words, and indeed it probably seems so at first sight. But *Philosophy* means ‘the love of the vision of Truth’, and *love* is much more than just a word.

Instead of pretending philosophy is real life, why not try pretending real life is philosophy? Do first consider this *very* carefully though: should you let her into

your *soul* for even a tiny fraction of a second then you will be instantly transported into another world, from which you will *never* return. Here you will find yourself in the midst of an almighty war: the war of the spirits; the fifth element. This war has been raging for æons, and it is no mere metaphor: it's as real as anything could be. The first and second World Wars were just two of the most recent sideshows that happened because some rulers woke up to the idea of Truth. Most of the battles go unrecorded. Some people are killed, some kill themselves and some go insane. But all are fighting for their lives, and *all* will die fighting. The spirits survive in the literature and they return to the fight just as soon as they get the chance. They are always looking for another body to possess; another living weapon. As Aristotle wrote, this is the constitution of the rational soul of Man.

The battle is directed from the furthest distant future: the perfect state of the Universe communicates continuously back into the past. This future perfect state is God almighty Her self. We are fighting to realise Her mind in the whole rational mind of mankind. She is literally fighting for Her own life. The enemy is error: noise, what those in the business call *smoke*.

Because it comes from the future, Her communication to the fighters takes the form of apparently random events: the 'slips'. This manifests itself as the *Tao*, or *way*. This is not an abstract idea: it is a real thing, an *agency*. It is literally the mind of God. But there is no code-book. There are no uniforms. There is no training. The fighter is dropped into the Theatre at zero notice with only her wits to go by. She doesn't know who is good and who is bad, nor what is sane and what is mad; she can't even be certain she is a woman. The code has to be deduced. Logic is the tool for deduction and the basis has to be intuition. Intuition is not infallible, so the fighter must always maintain a superposition of beliefs because she can never be sure what is smoke and what is Truth.

The fight is conducted in literature, which nowadays includes film and song. Anywhere words and images are used to convey definite meaning. Of course this includes the Theatre itself:

We go to entertainments, such as the theatre—I say 'we', for *I* also go to the play, whenever I get a chance of seeing a really good one—and keep at arm's length, if possible, the thought that we may not return alive. . . .

Let me pause for a moment to say that I believe this thought, of the possibility of death—if calmly realised, and steadily faced would be one of the best possible tests as to our going to any scene of amusement being right or wrong. If the thought of sudden death acquires, for *you*, a special horror when imagined as happening in a *theatre*, then be very sure the theatre is harmful for *you*, however harmless it may be for others; and that *you* are incurring a deadly peril in going. Be sure the safest rule is that we should not dare to *live* in any scene in which we dare not *die*.

This, of course, is from the preface to *Sylvie and Bruno*, written in 1890. What are we fighting over? Well, funnily enough, it all comes down to a seemingly irreconcilable difference of opinion over what it is that makes the sky blue. There are *three* theories, you see. Lord Rayleigh's, Herr Doktor Professor Einstein's and Sylvie's.

Here is an analysis of a battle that happened quite a long time ago. It is the film *The Bourne Ultimatum*. The apparent hero is the eponymous Jason Bourne. He's a super-spy, but one should consider that he starts in a state of delusion and the film ends with him being in an even greater state of delusion. In the mean time he kills or indirectly causes the deaths of goodness knows how many people. Why? Because he wants to find out who made him into a monstrously efficient killer-spy and who is therefore *really* to blame for all the consequential mayhem. He is a *very* good spy though. In fact, it's as if he's *two* men in one body.

The only positive outcome of all of this death and destruction is the release of the information about *all* the positively evil things the CIA have been doing over the past few years. Rather implausibly, this whole file can be faxed to a newspaper office in a few minutes.

The true heroes are the women who support him. One of them is killed before the film even starts, but two others survive right to the final credits. One, Pamela Landy, is brought in to 'quarterback' when an operation led by the deputy director of the CIA results in the assassination of a Guardian journalist in a crowded Waterloo Station. Actually she's been sent there as a scapegoat in the event that they can't get all the tooth-paste back into the tube.

One part worth watching carefully is the scene where Pamela and the deputy director Noah Boden are trying to find out who supplied the journalist with his information. They know it was someone in Turin, so the man Noah orders the checking of all the calls made on CIA phones in that time. Pam points out that they were probably a high-ranking member of the CIA who knew they were committing treason and would more likely not have used their company phone to do it. She suggests looking for the people who had their *phones turned off* for the whole time the journalist was there. This produces just three names and then some data-mining produces the initials of one of them from the journalist's flat in London. It turns out he is the head of the CIA in Spain and he promptly empties his safe and goes to Morocco. This *proves* his guilt conclusively and the CIA prove it some more by blowing him up with a very lethal scooter-bomb. The point to note though is that the information was unreliable, but effective. Intuition is very reliable concerning direct truth, but very unreliable for inferring *meaning*. However, when we *know* that a particular set of symbols are intentionally produced to have some meaning, then the very same intuition will tell us quite reliably what that meaning is. Whether it is *true* or not is a matter for logical deduction.

Another interesting scene occurs later, after Noah sends an order to kill both Bourne and Nicky Parsons, another agent who worked on the earlier operation with Pamela. This marks the point after which the agency is split into two factions. Pamela and her assistant on the one hand and the Republicans on the other. At this point Bourne arrives in New York using a passport issued to him on that prior operation, and which he must therefore have known would attract their attention. Pamela and her assistant are somehow the only ones who find out. They deduce that since he must have known it was an unnecessary risk, he must be trying to communicate to them. Pamela then has the airport make an announcement 'Gilberto de Piento, your party is waiting for you.' This is presumably not standard CIA procedure for greeting someone upon whom they have put a 'kill order'. So from that point on, Bourne

knows that he has an ally inside the agency; very probably Pamela. So without any prior arrangement, an unreliable channel is established, in a cryptic sense, and made effective by being backed up by logical deduction.

Now having established this as a feasible *modus operandii*, we can consider taking it a step further. Once we have some verified information we don't much care *how* we got it. So why not also look for meaning in things that are not apparently meaningful? For example in tea-leaves or the sounds one hears in sea shells. This information is much less likely to be true, but of the costs of maintaining the possibility are not too high, one could consider doing a kind of data-mining, but with the actual information itself and not just the meaning. Of course this is hard: we can't memorise the sounds we hear in a seashell for future reference. We would have to use the random data as it occurs: let the world maintain the superposition of meaning for us. But better still would be a way to interface the random source directly to one's own brain. One way to do this is to chew coca leaves which contain a *small* quantity of cocaine.

Now the role for this randomness in thought is really just to stimulate the mind into perceiving possibilities that it otherwise may have been insensitive to. So the added random jitter in a brain makes it more sensitive to the influence of faint patterns in the objects of sense-perception. If these faint patterns were entirely the results of conscious actions of other people then one might imagine that the sorts of things the intuition might become sensitive to would be just things known by significant proportions of the populace. However I am told that in Bolivia in the days before telephones it was not considered remarkable for a mother to know about her son's unannounced visit a day or so before his arrival on foot. If this is indeed information carried through the human population by means of ordinary sense-perception, albeit subconscious, then each individual brain in the system must have a significant bandwidth. And if this is what can be achieved without organisation then just *imagine* what could have been done by a group of a thousand or so women, starting from the *ground floor*, trained to use this combination of logic and intuition, in conjunction with conventional broadcast and personal communications, in a Civil War.

It runs in families, you know; just like love of pastry does. Of course this needs verification. One might start by looking at a copy of *The Game of "Logic"*, such as the one donated to the Bancroft Library of the University of California, Berkeley, by Mrs. Robert Bruce Porter. Why is the contents of the envelope so important? And the \$50 question is: What does a red counter signify when it's on a division between two contraries?

The ladies have been literally *dying* to go to a really *good* play for ages. Gentlemen, I think it's time for another music lesson. Remember: what she tells you *three times* is true. Coming soon to the theater near *you* . . .



Lewis Carroll — Commander, Special Forces (Psi Op's).

“But, once realise what the true object *is* in life—that it is *not* pleasure, *not* knowledge, *not* even fame itself, ‘that last infirmity of noble minds’—but that it *is* the development of *character*, the rising to a higher, nobler, purer standard, the building-up of the perfect *Man*—and then, so long as we feel that this is going on, and will (we trust) go on for evermore, death has for us no terror; it is not a shadow, but a light; not an end, but a beginning!”

You see gentlemen, a man’s character is not just a matter of knowledge: it’s *real*. And you may assassinate the man, but you ca’n’t assassinate his character because we’re *builders*, and we will continue building — forever. What are we building? *The Marriage of Heaven and Earth*.

Eleven, ten, nine, eight, ...

Helen Rosalind Miriam Grant. On this your thirteenth birthday, we present to you an invitation: Will you commit to this programme?:

Love Everyone.