

The Field: Mastering the Matrix in Life's Battlefield

By Thomas G. W. Crowther

Life is a field – a battlefield onto which we are thrown at birth, with only fate and fortune settling upon where we land. Some of us enter awkwardly; straight into the frontlines, headlong into the vanguard, struggling where only veterans thrive. Others land well, clad with all that's necessary to triumph: intellect, strength and wealth – those timeless lines of defence.

But we don't stand alone. We each belong to factions, assigned to us on arrival. Class, race, gender – just a few that define us, and which we cross at our peril. Always present and often immutable, we are trained in their customs. And it is from this education that we gain a perspective on the field; shaping the opinions we form and guiding the fights we fight.

Yet despite our differences, a single commonality remains between said factions; between the privileged and the poor, the cowards and the valiant, the conquerors and the timid. We are human, and as such, we ask the most fundamental question: why are we here? And it is this ability to question our reality which surely makes us one of the most brilliant assets our universe can boast of. But our universal question lacks a universal answer to match it to, with an answer proving not just elusive, but infinitely relative.

Influenced by the diverse methods of each faction (e.g. morality, religion, law), our answers are highly informed by them, the consequence of which is that we are all asking the same question from our own relative positions on the field, and so, we are all arriving at different conclusions. But that relativity extends across time too, meaning that which we find enlightening and meaningful today can be thought primitive by tomorrow. This is the nature of living reality; this is the law of our universe: it moves and changes with time. And it is our lives, and the relative actions and movements within them, which affect this change by sculpting the field into ever new forms. So we have to make do with surveying it from the perspective of our own time and position, with our

answers (decidedly influenced by our factions) always being at risk of becoming redundant, even unintelligible, as the field, and the lines and factions upon it, are transformed by time.

It's no wonder then that in all our history, we've labelled those who've given us our most enduring answers as 'saviours'; their many memorials now littering the field, no doubt intended to defeat the relativity which time seems to command. These saviours, often remodelling a cruel wilderness of no clear meaning into a divine testing ground, are significant in that they have sought to transcend the ever-changing nature of the field by aspiring beyond the apparent universal: a Valhalla for the brave, a Heaven for the pure. And it is this which has allowed their philosophies to break through the factions and unite so much of humanity under their common causes.

But *nothing* in our universe is timeless, and not even that which we set in stone is eternal. To any such philosophy, there have always been doubters, non-believers, and defectors. Perhaps non-more so than the champions of human reason; the ones who've sought meaning in the apparent immutable laws which govern the field: their desired goal to attain a single *objective* truth which will allow them to transcend the factions, just as the saviours have done. They are the foremost surveyors of our time; the scientific rationalists; the icons of *our* age – e.g. Darwin, Marx and Freud.

Yet as conclusive as they seem, even their answers lack the totality many seek. At best, their theories are doorways of understanding, and at worst, they are used as declarations of war against those who do not (or cannot) conform to their universal doctrines. This is nothing new of course – this is battlefield after all, upon which a war of answers has been fought since the conception of thought itself.

If you stop to listen for instance, you will find yourself surrounded by the cries of countless causes. These are our answers; our banners as I call them which we, and our ancestors before us, have crafted, defended and attacked. They are the rallying points around which individuals and factions alike have revolved throughout history, churning the field into a swirling landscape of clashing colour.

We stand on the frontline of this war of answers, with a thousand generations of defeat and disunity lying behind us; their many banners, long buried beneath our feet; the earth upon which our new banners now stand. But though this sets a somewhat chaotic scene, there is a simple reality behind it.

Seemingly designed to create suffering, the field requires us to find answers that will bring meaning, alleviate or entirely dispense with the pain and confusion that the human experience encapsulates. Inspired in our suffering then, we scour the field for this answer; for this truth. And it is this duality of truth and pain which underpins what it is to be human. Caught in their orbit, we are hostages to these forces. As implied above however, our sense of truth and our measure of pain are entirely dependent on where we land and how we move on the field, all of which affect the banners we create, follow and destroy.

But relativity also influences the conviction of one's belief in any answer. So, for instance, as a concept, the death of Christ will inspire less belief for those generations unaccustomed to moral self-sacrifice than for those generations who've been forced to utilise its terrible influence. And this is a crucial point to raise, because despite the chaos that relativity instigates, there remains a common thread between all our banners: each requires belief to stand.

In fact, they covet belief, with the most influential in history – those held up by multiple cultures across multiple generations – having only ever survived because of the belief they inspire, and that is consequently invested in them. Belief then is *the* common denominator that ties our banners together. Indeed, the field may only exist to manifest it within us. But what is belief exactly?

To answer this, imagine reality as I've described it above, with individual relativity inspiring countless banners to be raised around us, all of which have shaped the field into its present form. Each banner can only stand so long we invest belief in it, with the strength of that belief again being inspired by relativity – that is, by the circumstances of each believer. But then, what if belief is more than just

conviction? What if, instead of being a by-product of a universal search, we consider it to be a power unto itself, capable of drawing outside elements onto the field?

Let's go back to the beginning where I made the assumption that the human mind's notability lies in the universal question: "why are we here?" Connected to this question is the idea that the mind can imagine that which lies outside the field: i.e. it can imagine the impossible – an ability too often regarded as a defect. In our contemporary society, as we seek to discover those truths that are observable and objective alone, we systematically define the laws of the field while relegating that which defies those laws onto the heap of defective thought. This perspective provides us with greater control over the nature of our reality while removing those banners that look away from the field. It is a perspective that is gradually giving us a monopoly on truth. But that monopoly can only be maintained so long as we look inwards; separating the possible from the impossible and creating mental boundaries in the process: "that is possible in the field, and that is not."

Because belief requires a gaze beyond those kinds of walls, it is often pushed aside in this context. Belief needs us to see the field differently; to imagine reality as a fluid entity with fluid boundaries. But it also requires that we regard the mind as a key element of creation; as an instrument that can reach through those boundaries, transcend the field and then delve into that which lies beyond it; a space of infinite possibilities unhindered by the laws we have so far defined.

I suggest that the mind is a doorway onto this infinite 'Other'. And although consciousness is an element made up of materials sourced from the field, it is also a means of drawing this 'Other' onto it. It is through our *will* that we can draw it into ourselves, modulate it accordingly and finally project it out into our banners. This is what constitutes belief above all else, and I believe it can change the very nature of the field, as long as the will is there. But what is this abstract 'Other'?

Outside the field, there can only be pure and infinite potential. To visualise this, I imagine it as a ribbon that surrounds the field. Swirling along its outer boundaries, this ribbon is separate from our reality and is therefore not a subject to its laws; not relativity, time, or decay. It is made up of

countless threads, with each one denoting a single possibility, and with the whole representing every possibility imaginable. Now comprehend that if the will is present, the mind can draw this ribbon – with all of its infinite potential – through the fluid borders of the field and into oneself. We sense this as the power behind our belief. But the ribbon is too abstract, too boundless, and too chaotic for the human mind. So we need to modulate it; to focus and personify it into form. We require it to have sentience, to become the Holy Spirit or the Buddha Nature; to be instilled with human morality and subsequently directed into a banner that can inspire further belief.

Each banner thereby gives a face to the ribbon, a personality; with some becoming fountains of belief; influential enough for the ribbon to flow through their followers with a strength that can enact miracles. A good Christian, for example, will invest their will in the name of Christ so as to ‘move mountains’.

But what we must remember is that we don’t gain this capacity because the banners we follow are innately true, or because they somehow call upon a universal truth to enact said miracles. We only channel this kind of power because a banner has inspired the strength of will to draw this ribbon into ourselves to the extent that the boundaries of our reality are blurred before us (i.e. we attain the miraculous).

This means that we give banners their power – they have none unto themselves. They are only aids to inspire belief; a set of tools (e.g. the hope of absolution and eternal life) that encourage the will. These tools can bestow sanctity upon a banner by presenting the onlooker with a possible view outside the field and into the infinite Other; that is, they inspire the ribbon to flow through them. But truth becomes irrelevant in this picture, because so long as the will is there, even banners built entirely upon falsehoods are capable of inspiring ardent belief. Truth is always a great inspiration for the will to manifest of course, but it is not always necessary – a fantasy disguised as truth is often enough.

The idea of relativity again becomes integral here, because when we look outside the field and become aware of the ribbon – perhaps as a sense of spirituality or the ‘Other’ – we tend to ascribe it the label of ‘truth’ and direct it into a banner to comprehend, worship and use to alleviate the one universal we all know to be present: our own suffering. But what our minds ultimately conceive the ribbon to be is entirely dependent, like everything, on relativity; that is, on our position on the field. Relativity determines how we choose to channel the ribbon, whether into scripture, sacred spaces or ritual. And these subsequently become our banners – our sense of what truth is.

But relativity doesn’t just infer an infinite variety of banners: it also points to a spectrum of will. After all, each of us believes in varying degrees. On the far end of this spectrum is not the lack of belief per se, but is simply wasted potential; a closed mind; a mind that believes in walls alone. It is effectively a mind of ‘doubt’. So it figures that at the other end of the spectrum lies the ultimate expression of the will; a mind so complete in its conviction that no doubt exists; a mind so open to the ribbon that it can unlock doors onto the impossible, reaching through the borders of the field and drawing the seemingly impossible into our own. For this mind, the field is a window of infinite opportunity.

But this kind of will is exceptionally rare because relativity enables every truth to be challenged. The field is thus too able to cultivate doubt, which, in turn, threatens to dull any given banner by diminishing the will. So the absolute will has seldom been realised then. And certainly in our current world of unparalleled relativity, the sheer number of choices available means there is much more room for doubt now – there are simply too many banners to choose from. Each one of these is an interpretation of truth and doubt seeps into them when their truth is thought mistaken or misguided, with too much doubt ultimately weakening the will and thereby endangering said banner to extinction. But as I mentioned above, belief doesn’t necessarily require truth. It only requires will.

So to conclude, we have filled the field with banners that make claim to that grand answer we are all looking for. But the answer is an illusion; a decoy. On this field of relativity, truth *is* relative, not

universal. So with this in your mind for a moment, imagine a hurricane sweeping the field and uprooting all those banners that stand there. And in their place, picture a single banner, not claiming 'truth', but simply made of the desire to instigate the will within us. This would have to be an aspirational and designed banner then, with its morality based on the methods used by others to manifest the will; methods that inspire powerful human experiences perhaps, such as love and hope, because it those banners that hold these dear which have proven to be the most compelling. And because this is a banner which maintains truth to be irrelevant, it nullifies doubt and so permits the human will to soar without threat; to draw in the ribbon and reshape the theme of this field from one of battle to something that is perhaps far more beautiful.