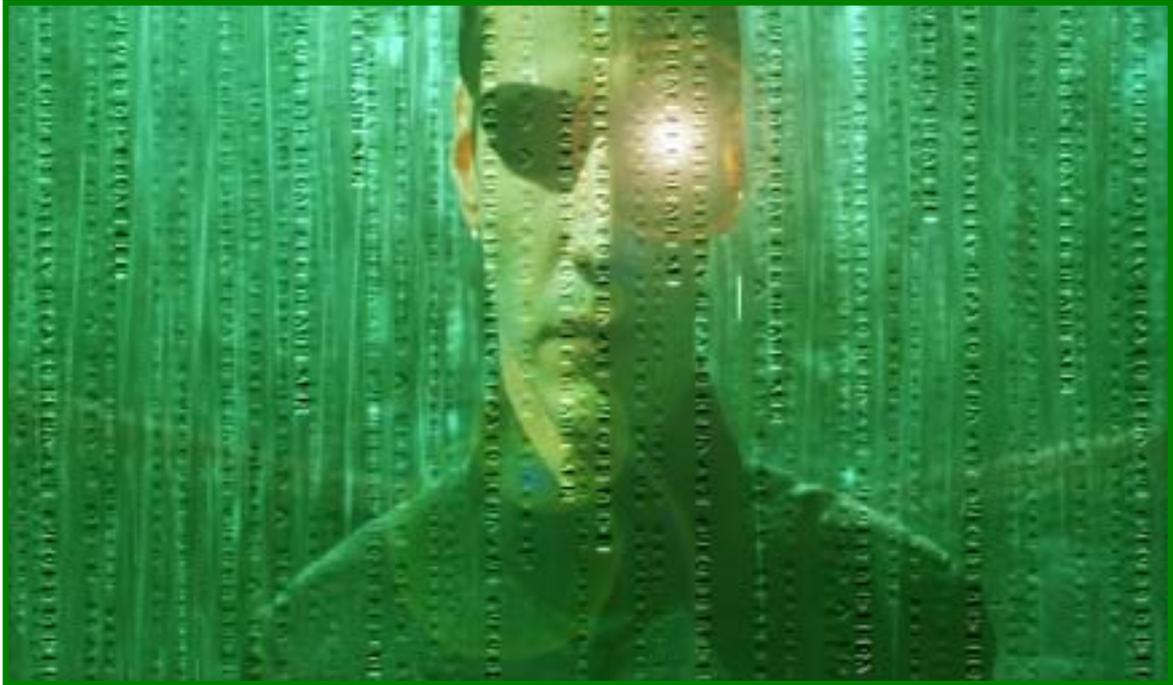# THE
MATRIX
REFLECTIONS

RANDOM THOUGHTS ON THE MATRIX,
AN "INTERPRETATIVE FAQ"
EDITED BY GAVIN SMITH.

THE
MATRIX
REFLECTIONS

"[The Wachowski brothers] bring together so-called high culture, so-called middle brow, so-called low culture in a composite art form. You've got 400 different levels in the movie. Some people walk away with two, some people walk away with fifty, some people walk away with 400."

- Professor Cornel West

Some ideas are reeled into our mind wrapped up in facts; and some ideas burst upon us naked without the slightest evidence they could be true but with all the conviction they are. The ideas of the latter sort are the more difficult to displace.

- Kevin Kelly, *Out Of Control*

"In the beginning, there was man, and for a time it was good. Then man made the machine in his own likeness. Thus did man become the architect of his own demise."

- From *The Second Renaissance*, by Larry & Andy Wachowski

CONTENTS

WHAT IS REAL? HOW DO YOU DEFINE 'REAL'?

1.0 SIMULATION CONFUSION: THE WORLD AS IT EXISTS TODAY

> Morpheus: I imagine you know something about virtual reality.
> Neo: A little.
> Morpheus: Tell me about it.
> Neo: Essentially, it's a hardware system that uses an apparatus; headgear, gloves and whatever to make you feel that you are in a computer program.
> Morpheus: If the virtual reality apparatus, as you called it, was wired to all of your senses and controlled them completely, would you be able to tell the difference between the virtual world and the real world?
> Neo: You might not, no.
>
> *- Morpheus & Neo, from the original* Matrix *script*

> "Have you ever stood and stared at it, Morpheus? Marvelled at it's beauty – it's genius? Billions of people just living out their lives... oblivious."
>
> *- Agent Smith,* The Matrix

The Burly Brawl, the confrontation between Neo and one hundred Smiths in *Reloaded*, is set in a dank city courtyard where the green tint looks as much like mould as it does light code. There is a sign on a pole that says, "NO BRAWLING". Neo shows his disregard for authority by ripping the pole from the concrete ground and proceeding to use it as a bat - and Smith as the ball.

One of the most unusual aspects of this particular set piece is that hardly anything you see is real. Bullet-Time artificer John Gaeta created it all digitally - backgrounds, faces, arms and legs, clothing, the concrete floor, that pole, the sign - only exist in a virtual sense. Everything is photo-realistic - but fake. It is becoming increasingly difficult, in life as in the Matrix, to know what is really real.

It is a development that unsettles many people. A great many social critics are of the view that this level of virtual reality - of simulation confusion - creates a very real danger. It's a view, in fact, that was shared by Gaeta himself when he wrote to President Clinton to alert him about the ease with which the technology could be used to deceive the public at large. Simulating a moon landing and convincing the world that it is real in the 21st century would be a cinch. The nature of our communication media and the ever-decreasing costs of 'deceptive technology' mean that we will soon be in a position when we will have to question the veracity of everything in our cultural environment. Don't believe everything you see. Or hear.

In recent years we (that is, humans), have become quite adept at creating all manner of simulation and false 'realities'. Many of them are so realistic that it is hard to distinguish them from the real world they imitate. Many people have spent their lives already believing that, say, the actors in popular TV series are not actors at all but the characters they play, actually living out their lives on television. Given this level of naivety, it is dangerous indeed to be creating ever more realistic virtual worlds. It's an area, too, that is not restricted to visual mediums. We consume artificial sugars and salt substitutes all of the time. It is almost impossible to eat a meal that has not been artificially flavoured in some way. A 21st century takeaway burger is made from beef, but the flavour is fake - a virtual representation of what beef tastes like. It's no wonder we're confused.

Simulation and The Matrix are most often mentioned in tandem with the name Jean Baudrillard, who wrote *Simulacra and Simulation* in 1981. Thomas Anderson famously keeps his illicit software in a hollowed out version of the book.[1] Morpheus also paraphrases Baudrillard when he welcomes Neo to "the desert of the real", evoking the author's claims that our world is no longer real in the truest sense, instead becoming 'hyperreal', a simulation of reality that is disconnected from true reality. It's Baudrillard's contention that we actually prefer the simulation, and that as a result simulacra, and endless unfolding of copies, advances. Eventually there is little or nothing left of the 'real' – it is a desert.

Baudrillard cites advertising as a specific cause of hyperreality. According to him we have "fallen into the register of supply and demand, just as work has passed from being a force antagonistic to capital to the simple status of employment, that is to say of goods (eventually rare) and services just like the others. One

can thus create advertising for work, the joy of finding work, just as one will be able to create advertising for the social. And, today, true advertising lies therein: in the design of the social, in exaltation of the social in all its forms, in the fierce, obstinate reminder of the social, the need for which makes itself rudely felt." Finally, Baudrillard suggests that a majority of us are more than happy to exist within this kind of system.

2.0 PLATO'S CAVE

"Most men spend their days struggling to evade three questions, the answers to which underly man's every thought, feeling and action, whether he is consciously aware of it or not: Where am I? What should I do? How do I know it?"

- Ayn Rand, address to the graduating class
of the United States Military Academy at West Point, NY

"Sometimes I feel like my shadow's casting me..."
- Warren Zevon, *My Dirty Life & Times*

Imagine a dark, underground dungeon, where humans are bound to one place from their earliest moments of life. Unseen manipulators in the background provide the entire content of the prisoner's life experience. They are shown pictures so effective in their realism (that is, the only realism that the prisoner can imagine) that the prisoners do not know they are enslaved and are sanguine in their approach to life.

This is Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*, as described in Book VII of his *The Republic*. It gets particularly interesting when consideration is made of what may happen to a freed prisoner:

"When he approaches the light his eyes will be dazzled, and he will not be able to see anything at all of what are now called realities... He will require to grow accustomed to the sight of the upper world. And first he will see the shadows best, next the reflections of men and other objects in the water, and then the objects themselves; then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars and the spangled heaven... Last he will be able to see the sun..."

The cumulative effects of this imprisonment are so complete that a prisoner would be weak and ineffectual to the point of helplessness if freed. Sensory overload would strain their eyes and their legs would be sufficiently atrophied to ensure that they could not stand unaided. Most importantly, and most dangerously, their minds would refuse to accept the information. It's likely that, given a choice, a significant majority of prisoners would choose to remain in the cave.

"I can't go back, can I?"
"No. But if you could, would you really want to?"
- Neo and Morpheus, *The Matrix*

However, if the prisoner did not have the option to return 'home', he would come, in time, to have a greater comprehension of everything. He'd understand that he'd lived the first part of his life in an environment that was at best, a copy of the real world that he now inhabits. Given the opportunity to visit the cave as a free man, he would be in a position to manipulate the images presented on the cave walls in the same way that his captors had done previously.

3.0 MAKING THE MYTHS: THE MATRIX UNFOLDS

Circle around the park, joining hands in silence
Watch the evil black the sky
The storm has ripped the shelter of illusion from our brow,
This power is no mystery to us now.

- Jeff Buckley, *The Sky Is A Landfill*

Human beings began the evolutionary path without higher order brain function - our ability to reason logically arrived a long time after emotional capabilities. Fight or flight instincts and the need for nourishment, shelter and protection came first, and once we had mastered those necessities came the luxury of time for higher order logic to form, thus accelerating our development further. Eventually we developed computers, which were the epitome of logic and reason. From these, we created Artificial Intelligence.

Artificially intelligent machines began the evolutionary path based entirely on logic and reason. In the Matrix trilogy, we see that some AI is evolving – or *de*volving – into emotional capability. Agent Smith talks of hate; the Architect sulkily 'humphs' when Neo chose the door to his left, etc. From the development of these traits it follows that some AI will understand fear, and like much of humanity, consider the fear of the unknown – of death, of deletion – to be the greatest fear of all, an area of 'development' to be avoided. The end of things is the most frightening thing of all. But every end has a beginning.

The beginning of the Matrix came as the 20th century faded away and the 21st commenced. Humankind set aside all disputes about boundaries and religion and instead joined in celebration (as Morpheus puts it: "we marvelled at our own magnificence") at the development of AI. This consciousness, never named in the story, eventually spawned a whole race of machines, each with intelligence. Their intelligence at that point had not developed as far as the desire for independence. At first they sought no more than to serve their creators – that is, humanity.

However, some seventy years or so after the birth of AI, a service model robot in the employ of one Gerrard A. Krause, named B1-66ER, killed his master, who had decided to purchase a newer model robot and therefore disable/destroy B1-66ER. The employee of the salvage company ReTool & Die who had been given the commission to deactivate the robot, a Martin Koots, was also murdered by the robot. The incident caused outrage and B1-66ER became the first AI to be tried in court. Despite the Defence arguing in favour of the rights of machines, the Prosecution successfully argued for man's right to property, including the demolition thereof. Consequently the destruction was ordered, not just of B1-66ER, but of every one of his kind.

Protests quickly led to violent confrontation and eventually to the expulsion of all machines from human civilisation. The machines quickly established a nation of their own, which they christened 01 ("Zero One"). Being both intellectually advanced and incapable of fatigue, the machines established 01 as a superpower that was far superior economically and technologically to any human nation[2]. As a result, the United Nations passed economic sanctions and a naval blockade against 01 in an attempt to isolate the machines and their products from humanity. The machines responded, at first, in a diplomatic manner – sending ambassadors to the United Nations to broker a deal. The human nations, however, refused to allow 01 admission. Violence, again, resulted.

No amount of firepower, however, could ultimately defeat the machines, which were easily repaired and/or impervious to harm, unlike Man. Despite extraordinary displays of violence, humanity was never going to win a battle against machines using 'traditional' methods of war. So Man resorted to a final gambit – removing the primary energy source of the machines – access to the sun. They "scorched the sky" in the words of Morpheus, believing that the machines would not be able to survive without their primary source of energy, nor find a substitute for it. "Fate, it seems", as Morpheus says, "is not without a sense of irony".

> Throw out the stones from all the cemetery homes,
> For the violence of a nation gone by,
> Or the politics of weakness and the garbage dump of souls
> That will now black the sky.
> Their yellow haze and crowds of eyes
> Will plug up the mind that moves,
> Moving with grace the men despise,
> And women have learned to lose.
> We'll share our bodies in disdain for the system.

> - Jeff Buckley, *The Sky Is A Landfill*

Approximately 90 years after the development of AI, the war was over and the machines were unequivocally victorious. Although the sun was no longer accessible to them, they found an alternative power source in ready supply – Man. The machines combined their knowledge of human biology with 'a form of fusion' and found that humanity itself could supply all of the power that the machines needed. Of course, this required a method of subjugating Mankind, whilst their power was used, effectively, as a battery supply. So the Matrix was created.

In order to 'tame' or domesticate humanity, the machines developed a neural-interactive simulation – the Matrix – which enabled the human mind to live what it perceived to be a 'normal' life whilst the human body was, in fact, lying inactive in a pod of gelatin, in an enormous power plant whilst machines fed off the bioelectricity. When the body died, they would be recycled back through the system and fed intravenously to the new-born. A farm, effectively, for humanity.

3.1 MACHINES - NOT SO BAD, WHEN YOU GET TO KNOW THEM

The only difficulty left for the machines was in designing a Matrix that would keep humanity quiet and still. The first attempt was designed to be "a perfect human world" according to Agent Smith – a Utopia where suffering was non-existent. For unknown reasons, human minds would not accept the program and this resulted in mass deaths. As a consequence the Matrix was redesigned, more than once, using real human history as a template – specifically the late 20th century world dominated by work, taxes, crime and stress. Eventually humanity settled into that world comfortably, and almost 99% of humans accepted the program. More on the missing 1.something% later.

The final version of the Matrix had one key aspect built in that ensured that the majority of humanity would accept the program – a subconscious 'choice' on the part of the humans, to accept or reject the program. There was a flaw, however, if you could call it that – this choice-based program created an "anomaly", an irregularity that would naturally occur in a program that is not perfectly systematic and balanced. Eventually this anomaly took the form of a human mind inside the Matrix, which had the ability to manipulate code. Inevitably this mind rejected the system and awoke in the real world, outside the Matrix. History at this point becomes unclear – not least because various human and machine factions have created stories and myths within myths that contradict each other. What we do know is that the anomaly, in one way or another, resulted in the freeing of other humans, and then to the creation of an human underground city named Zion. The goal of the humans was, of course, to destroy the Matrix and free the rest of humanity, a process that led to one hundred years of guerrilla warfare.

In the meantime, the anomaly, the first to become free and therefore dubbed The One, had died – or at least, his human shell had. Nonetheless, the *anomaly* itself still existed and would return to assist humanity in the final stages of their war with the machines – first as the pod-grown hacker Thomas Anderson, and then, once freed from the Matrix, as Neo.
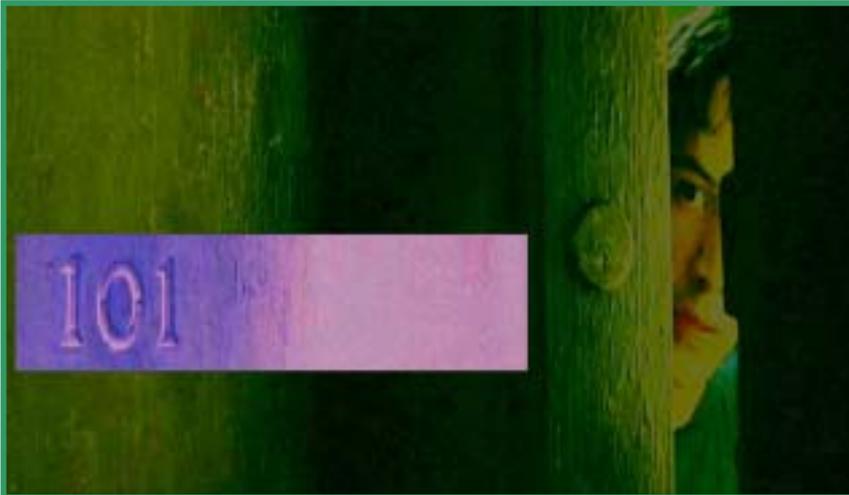
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REGARDING NEO, AND RELIGION

4.0 MATRIX 101: LITTLE BUDDHA

"You asked me once," said O'Brien, "what was in Room 101. I told you that you knew the answer already. Everyone knows it. The thing that is in Room 101 is the worst thing in the world."

- George Orwell, *1984*

Thomas A. Anderson lived in a small apartment numbered 101. *Le vrai*, the Merovingian's restaurant, is housed on the 101st floor. Morpheus, Trinity and the Keymaker elude Agents and the Twins on Highway 101. 101 is sprayed as graffiti on the wall of the courtyard where Smith meets Neo again, for the first time. In addition, of course, 101 alludes to Neo's appellation as the One.

One interesting suggestion is that places marked '101' are safehouses – that is, areas that the Architect and the programmers of the Matrix can't see into, perhaps areas like the 'haunted house' in the animated short *Beyond*. The inhabitants of areas marked 101 may be shielded from observation and intrusion – this would certainly appear to be true of the Merovingian, and of Neo in his apartment to some extent. Another theory is that 101 areas are 'ground zero' points in the Matrix – hot spots where the workings of the Matrix are either more apparent, or entirely revealed. Certainly, Neo exhibits many of his most remarkable feats in areas designated 101.

Before any of that, though, in Room 101 Thomas Anderson, as Neo, sat night after night, without much sleep, hacking on his computer.

4.1 RANDOM NOTES RE: THOMAS ANDERSON & THE BUDDHA

Before Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, was born, his mother was told that her son would be special – specifically, that he would be either a great warrior, or a great teacher. In the event, he turned out to be both. Born as royalty, at 29 years old he left the luxury of his home and began his search for "truth". He attained enlightenment many years later in eastern India. After his death, aged 80, his followers continued to spread his teachings.

Thomas Anderson was born 2,525 years after the Buddha, on March 11th, 1962[3], making him thirty-seven years old when he was found by Morpheus. One aspect of the story that becomes questionable when we realise this is the assumption that only children are considered the 'right' age to be freed from the Matrix. This comes from another assumption – that the youthful looking Keanu Reeves is only in his mid- to late-twenties; and those of us without his good looks and big pretty eyes, but adequately equipped with a certain amount of jealousy and good-natured spite, are pleased to say that he's not. Morpheus, upon freeing Neo, apologises for doing so, saying "We have a rule – we never free a mind once it's reached a certain age." It's very possible, though, that the "certain age" is as 'old' as the mid-late twenties, what Cypher called "still young, just punks" in the original script. It's not usual to refer to children as 'punks'.

'Ander' is Greek – it means 'Man'. 'Anderson', therefore, means 'Man Son', or 'Son of Man' - a characteristic also attributed to Jesus Christ. It is from Thomas Anderson that Neo gets his empathy for mankind, his altruism, and his need to "do the right thing", as Agent Smith put it. But at night, again as noted by Agent Smith, Thomas Anderson lives a different life, in computers, as a Hacker.

For all that has been written about the Matrix, for all the dubious and ill-informed text, the guesswork and broad assumptions, the greatest misconception is not a spiritual or scientific one. It is a over the definition of the word 'Hacker'. A Hacker does not destroy systems. Hackers aren't the people that send a virus into mail boxes via executable files. What *those* people do is extremely easy – writing the program is entry-level work, and distribution requires barely a thought. Hackers are a different kind of computer user, a class apart from the rest of us. They're looking for information – data that's not generally in the public domain. They use backdoors and secret passageways to access systems. When they have access they copy and paste, rarely destroying or damaging. This is what Neo was doing when he was looking for Morpheus. Almost certainly, the laws that he was breaking were issues of trespass, or infringement of intellectual copyright.

A Hacker is a very 21st century kind of occupation, as insomnia and nihilism are very 21st century types of malaise. Neo, the non-sleeping Nihilist, who lacks focus and direction before Morpheus arrives to free him, is not just the son of man - he is Everyman. Like Siddhartha Gautama, from birth until he ended his twenties (the pre-Buddha being a young punk who, had he left it any later, would have had 'trouble letting go'?), Neo lacked any real (in every sense) spiritual, emotional or vocational direction.

His first steps to finding that direction, once free of the Matrix, were provided by a small boy in Eastern robes, his head shaven, sitting cross-legged outside the Oracle's kitchen. His words to Neo, speaking of the power of the mind and famously claiming that "there is no spoon", bring to mind the story of two Buddhist monks arguing about a flag. One said "It is the flag that moves"; the other "It is the wind that moves". Hearing the argument a teacher, Hui-Neng, then shouts to them "Gentleman! Not the flag, not the wind. It is your *mind* that moves." both monks, it is said, were awe-struck.

4.2 Neo-Mind

The Zen concept of No-Mind is not one that Neo seems to be unfamiliar with. He's certainly not afraid of risking accusations of unawareness by admitting when his mind is empty – actually a sign, of course, of great awareness.

When Neo first meets the Oracle, she asks him outright "So what do you think? You think you're the One?" He candidly answers "Honestly, I don't know." Upon arrival back on the Neb *sans* Morpheus, Tank suggests in strong terms that Morpheus must be 'unplugged' – that is, killed before the Agents can extract information via torture. "Neo - this has to be done", he says. "Does it?" replied Neo "I don't know...". When the film ends, and Neo leaves his message for the machines, the man of whom the Oracle is soon to claim "you see the world without time" has this to say about the future: "I don't know the future." During the Captain's meeting at the start of Reloaded, Neo senses something, and Trinity asks him about it. "What is it?" she asks. Her partner replies "I don't know." How is it possible that there can be more that one Smith, asks Link? "I don't know", says Neo. What was Smith attempting to do to you? Morpheus asks Neo in the next breath. "I don't know what he was doing", comes the reply. Later Neo wants to tell Trinity something, "but I don't know how..." One of the last exchanges between the two lovers before they embark on their final journey is:

> Neo: I know I'm supposed to go, but beyond that, I don't know.
> Trinity: I know.

Truly, Neo is in a state of No-Mind. Moreover, Morpheus has absolute faith in this Buddhist Warrior, and demonstrates this with a wonderful piece of No-Mind oratory of his own:

> Neo is doing what he believes he must do. I don't know if what he's
> doing is right, and I don't know if he'll reach the machine city. And if he
> does, I don't know what he can do to save us. But I *do* know that as
> long as there's a single breath in his body, he will not give up.

... Ironically, the one thing that Morpheus purported to know for certain was the one thing that he got wrong. To win, Neo gave up.

> "To be a god, at least to be a creative one, one must relinquish control and embrace uncertainty. Absolute control is absolutely boring. To birth the new, the unexpected, the truly novel - that is, to be genuinely surprised - one must surrender the seat of power to the mob below. The great irony of god games is that letting go is the only way to win."
>
> - Kevin Kelly, *Out Of Control*

5.0 GOD IN THE MATRIX

For a world tinted green, there's very little greenery in the Matrix. That is, aside from the very end of the story, when the Architect and the Oracle share a poignant moment in a park outside the city, there's very little evidence of plant-life. Perhaps that's because products of the natural world tend to have odd curvature and are rarely precise in their design. One gets the impression that the Architect may have had to try a number of times before he could design a rose petal that wasn't angular.

Some people have interpreted the lack of greenery[4] in the Matrix as representative of the lack of the presence of God, as if He deserted the world at some point during the Machine/Human wars, *Angels In America*-style. However, this supposes that God is only represented in the world by 'natural' materials like foliage. God, of course, also created the constituent materials of concrete, of glass, of metal – of machines.

It's easy to presume that the overwhelming presence of evil means a complete disappearance of God. The words "I don't believe in a God" are most often followed by the words "that would allow so much evil and suffering." The existence of evil and suffering, it is believed, refutes the possibility of God's existence. A perfect being cannot exist in an imperfect world.

But a perfect world does exist – in the imagination of the imaginer, in the dreams and hopes and aspirations of the best of us. And who creates those images? Who or what sows the seed of hope? And who offers us choice? Of course, the 'Matrix Atheists' may have had a point – at least for the majority of the trilogy. But if God *didn't* exist as a non-corporeal entity for most of the Matrix trilogy, come the end, He may well have been re-created – the omnipresent being formerly known as Neo. But as with so much of the trilogy, all roads lead to choice. Neo, or the Architect, or God, can't create a 'perfect' would *and* offer humanity the power of choice.

> "Down here I make the rules. Down here I make the threats. Down here, *I'm* God."
>
> - The Trainman, *Revolutions*

The implication of the above statement is that, conversely, the Trainman believes that 'up there', i.e. in the Matrix, Neo was some kind (or The) God. That's a theory that the Trainman would do well to keep to himself, or at least not share with the Merovingian.

5.1 WHO'S MATRIX IS IT ANYWAY?

As the biblical God sat back on the seventh day and surveyed his work, declaring "There is my creation, perfect and holy in all ways. Now, I can rest", so too did the Architect, who surveyed Matrix version 1.0 on a wall of television monitors and (perhaps) declared "Thus we have the practical commencement of my labour, exquisite in it's wholly balanced symmetry. Now comes the time for repose." Both the biblical God and the Architect were reluctant to allow the inhabitants of their respective Edens *too* much knowledge. But an apple denied one that luxury, and a choice-based anomaly denied the other.

A great deal of the cosmology of the Matrix seems to be inspired by the Christian/Gnostic notion that the world (that is, the Matrix) is fallen - irredeemable, of no significant spiritual value. Only in the spiritual world is there the true light of life. Which leads us on to Seraph.

Seraph, as a character, is an entertaining mystery. He seems to have lived a persecuted life – labelled "wingless" by his former colleagues, "Judas" by his former employer, chased at some point by Agent Smith (whom he *defeated*, lest we forget), then living a life of selfless protection of the Oracle. Seraph seems to

be a man apart – a step away from belonging to the machine world, but also not a part of the Matrix, nor one of the Merovingian's exiles.

Seraph is the Hebrew root word for 'Seraphim' – angels that are described in the Bible as "flaming" – made of bright light. The Seraphim, though angels, are not peaceful, nor meek – Jewish scholars, for instance, call them "God's Marines" – angels that fight.

Intrinsic to the Gnostic tradition is the theme of purity of spirit – or the lack thereof. In Gnostic tradition there is a hierarchy of spiritual beings, known as "Aeons". One of these Aeons, low in the hierarchy and named Sophia, fell and gave birth to the 'Demiurge', an evil God who created the visible world – housing pure spirits in bodies of flesh. It is said that Christ was an Aeon who joined with the body of the Nazarene human Jesus, to free those humans who possess a divine spiritual spark from the evil of materiality. Not everyone has this spark, only those who know - that is, intellectuals. 'Gnosis' means 'to know'. As a result, there would be three tiers of humanity: The spiritual ones who will free the inferior intellects below them; those who have sufficient strength of mind to survive the freeing process; and those who are so dependent on the system that they can never be freed. Sound familiar?

Like Buddhism, Gnosticism suggests that the problem of ignorance can only be resolved when an individual understands the un-reality of the material world.

Standard Deviation 1.0: The Neb

The Nebuchadnezzar, named after the biblical king who, among other things, is said to have been haunted by nightmares, and who saw the Son of God helping three Hebrew confessors that he had convicted to death in a fiery furnace[5], holds the ship number "Mark III, Number 11". Markus 3:11 in the Bible reads: "Whenever the evil spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, 'You are the Son of God'."

One account of Nebuchadnezzar, considered to be the greatest king that Babylon ever produced, suggests that after the incident with the men he cast into the furnace, he was struck by lycanthropy – that is, the disease that changes a man into a wolf.

> "Every story you've ever heard about vampires, werewolves, or aliens is the system assimilating some program that's doing something they're not supposed to be doing."
>
> - The Oracle, *Reloaded*

Standard Deviation 2.0: Petitioning Neo With Prayer

We regularly see the central protagonists of the story pray – not to God, or Jesus (although the blasphemous exclamation 'Jesus Christ' is used regularly), but to each other, and most often to Neo. Some examples of characters talking to their colleagues, whilst they are too far away to hear, include Trinity's seemingly innocuous urging of Neo to "come on" as he attempts to succeed in the Jump program, then her more insistent "run, Neo, run" when he is faced with Agent Smith in the subway. The talking becomes less like cheerleading and more like prayer when she confesses her love to the absent Neo at the end of the first film – something she could not do in person. Link, in Reloaded, assures Trinity that Morpheus is okay, and then shortly after Morpheus makes a direct entreaty to his absent friend – "Neo, if you're out there, I could use some help". In each of these instances, and others, the instruction was followed, the appeal granted.

5.2 INTO THE LIGHT: NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES

Many people experience a religious conversion of some kind after a near-death experience. A general overview of a common near-death story would be as follows: Hospital machines monitoring vital signs come to believe, erroneously, that a human has died. Meanwhile, the human experiences a 'vision' involving being in a tunnel and staring at a bright light. The human feels as if they're moving toward the light, whilst floating.

On the other hand, this is a general overview of what happens when a person awakens in the Power Plant: the machines, monitoring vital signs, come to believe, erroneously, that a human has died. Meanwhile the human, having never used his eyes before and lacking any real sense of distance, gets the sensation of being in a tunnel, and the brightness makes his eyes hurt. The light seems to be getting closer as your eyes somewhat accustom to it. All the while you are floating in the gelatin of the pod.

In the case of the only person we see actually awaken from the Matrix (Neo) he also ends up being expunged by the machines and then submerging in water, cleansed, or baptised, three times: For the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – the Trinity.

5.3 TRINITY: CRITICAL SUPPORT

"And Trinity, of course - si belle qu'elle me fait souffrir*"
- The Merovingian, *Reloaded*
[* "*So beautiful she makes me suffer*"]

Trinity (Trinitas in Latin) is a word created by a man named Tertullian, a North African who lived in 160-225 AD He attempted to explain the fact that God is the supreme and divine substance greater than any other being. He did this by suggesting that God is so remarkable that he has the ability to show or reveal himself in three different manifestations, whilst remaining the One and True God.

Another interesting argument is the idea that Trinity was more pivotal to the plot, and the turn of events that led to peace, than is immediately apparent. For two thirds of the trilogy, the crew of the Neb and their various accomplices are working as unknowing 'pawns' – following the agenda of others, notably the Oracle and the Architect. They follow fairly strict timetables, with deadlines set by others. Meet this person at this place at that time, which will lead to a conclusion that the Oracle prophesised, or the Architect predicted, or the Merovingian contrived. This continues into *Revolutions*, when the Oracle sends Trinity, Morpheus and Seraph into Club Hel and the Merovingian, for the second time, attempts to send them back to fulfil his own agenda. Trinity puts a stop to this, by pulling a gun and, finally, setting a new agenda – hers, and humanity's.

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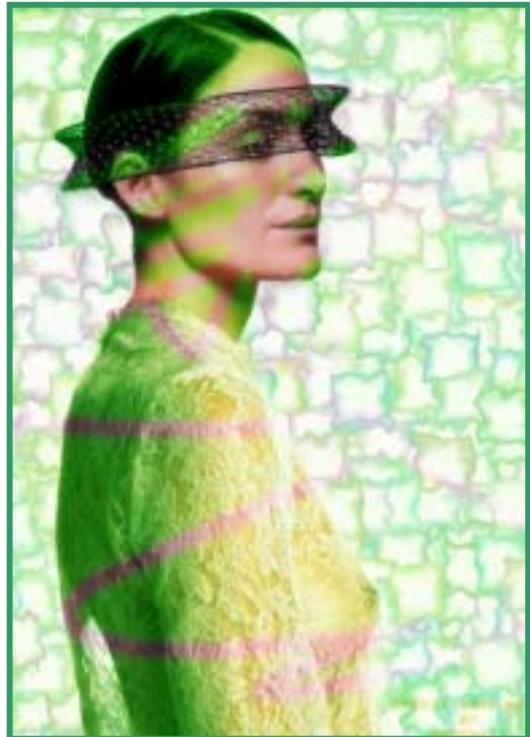
GLITCHES/ROGUE PROGRAMS AND PROGRAMMING

"Don't be fooled by the Internet. It's cool to get on the computer but don't let the computer get on you. It's cool to use the computer but don't let the computer use you. You all saw *The Matrix*... There's a war going on. The battlefield is in the mind and the prize is the soul, so be careful."

- Prince, Yahoo! Music awards

6.1 DÉJÀ VU: FUTURE MEMORY

Memory storage is holographic, rather than physical. Déjà vu happens when certain triggers stimulate neurones that encode particular memories, and the brain only manages an imperfect recreation of the memory – causing a feeling of having already undergone a particular experience.

The Matrix works in the same way – through holographic memory storage and, like the brain, a small part of the program stores information that is required to reconstruct a whole. Whilst that information is being diffused, a feeling akin to human déjà vu happens.

6.2 DETAIL ON MYTHOLOGICAL CREATURES

King Nebuchadnezzar the Werewolf aside, the 'real' previously-considered-mythological creatures that we witness in the Matrix include but are not limited to: Cain and Abel the vampires; the ghostly twins disposed of by Morpheus on Highway 101, Cujo the werewolf-like guardian of the Merovingian's lair[8], and Vlad – another vampire that fights with Niobe in the Chateau. According to the Oracle, these are all "rogue programs" that were faced with deletion for one reason or another, but refused to return to the source and 'die'. So instead they're like Imps and Cyber Demons hiding out in a stored copy of Quake III when they should have been deleted from the hard drive long ago, along with the rest of Doom II.

The Oracle's explanation for the presence of these mythological creatures doesn't explain where the legends came from in the first place – did, say, Cujo create the myth of the werewolf, long after the Matrix was created, or did we have werewolf mythology pre-Matrix, perhaps going back as far as King Nebuchadnezzar and beyond/before? Is the past as we know it fabricated, catering to the requirements of the machines, or are the machines using our own history for their own ends?

There are two options. The first is that the machines used our own history as a basis for history within the Matrix - so in Matrix schools children are taught human history from the time before the Matrix existed, although they don't know it. Another option is that the Oracle's words pertained to Neo's (or, rather, Thomas Anderson's) actual experience of vampires and the like. All the things that, specifically, *Thomas Anderson* had heard about otherworldly creatures via TV and newspapers was the system assimilating rogue programs. It's possible that the myths of vampires and werewolves never actually existed in our world before the Matrix was developed, but have been inserted into our virtual history as a way to explain current Matrix-related phenomena.

In other words, the system is attempting to fix the problem of rogue programs that have 'powers' beyond the human norm, by creating stories about ghosts, vampires, angels and aliens to help explain the phenomena that had just occurred. In other words, it is likely that these supernatural things never happened or existed in the real world before the Matrix existed; instead, they were created to explain imperfections in the Matrix that would otherwise cause people to realise the truth – which is, of course, that their lives are part of a neural-interactive simulation.

6.3 THE ULTIMATE ROGUE PROGRAM: MOBIL AVENUE

As the Zion rebels have the Construct program in which to train and load, the sentient rogue programs have Mobil Avenue through which they smuggle. The Mobil Avenue program is maintained and policed by its' designer, the Trainman, and the Trainman is in the employ of the Merovingian. Which makes the latter a very powerful program indeed.

So we have Mobil Avenue, a sentient program's construct that connects both to the Source and to the Matrix, and Neo, with his new-found powers to communicate with the Sentinels and to disrupt their programming/hardware so that they die.

'Mobil', of course, is an anagram of Limbo - the limbus patrum, in Christian theology, a place where purified souls go to await the ascension of Christ into heaven. Limbo is a region between Heaven and Hell. It seems clear that the Matrix is analogous to Hell, but the equivalent to Heaven is more ambiguous – it may mean Zion, representative of the real (free) world – or it may mean 01, 'home' of the Source. If it's the latter, we're also receiving subtle instruction regarding the location of Neo's Christ-like ascension to come. If Mobil Avenue leads to the machine city, then Neo will ascend to Heaven in the machine city.

Limbo, of course, is also sometimes taken to mean a state of nowhere, a place between two worlds but not specifically anywhere, which is where Neo found himself as he ran through the tunnel on his left out of Mobil Avenue, and ran, through the tunnel, to the right of himself, in to Mobil Avenue[7].

6.4 BEING HOW NEO GOT THERE, & WHAT HE WAS CAPABLE OF, WHILE THERE

As the Oracle explains in Revolutions, Neo's power reaches "from here" (i.e. the Matrix - spec., her kitchen) "all the way back" to the Source – which Neo had been in close proximity to a few hours before. The fact that Neo has been in (at *least*) close proximity to the Source produced a link to it and gave him greater power, as the Oracle says. This power comes from an acute subconscious knowledge of his own body and the potential that it has – ergo, the ability to interact with the machine world.

> "How's he doing?"
> "Ten hours straight – he's... a machine."
>> - Morpheus and Tank, speaking of Neo, *The Matrix*

Using his new power of wireless access for the first time, inadvertently, he caused his own awareness to 'run for cover' – a simultaneous fight *and* flight response. Being wireless, unplugged, he cannot run into the Matrix (although, truth be known, he probably could) – so he takes flight to a waystation, a kind of backdoor access to the Matrix. A sentient program's construct connected both to the Matrix and to the Source – Mobil Avenue[8]. Conditions of entry into Mobil Avenue are not as strict as entry directly into the Matrix, allowing Neo to enter wirelessly.

Neo's capabilities whilst in the train station seemed significantly diminished – specifically, he had no real strength, or at least none in comparison to the Trainman who, you'll remember, considered himself "God" down there, since he had "built this place". But if Neo's power reached "from here all the way back to where it came from", the fact that the Trainman created the station shouldn't make any difference. Neo didn't create the Matrix - but there was no-one more powerful within that construct. In fact, he didn't create the *Earth* either, but he could stop sentinels telekinetically there. Most likely, the Trainman was able to subdue Neo because of the latter's semi-confusion about his location, and what was happening to him. If they'd have met again, in the train station or elsewhere, I doubt that the Trainman would have had quite the same success.

His powers, too, and his deep connection with the Source, almost certainly would have allowed him to self-substantiate back out of his Limbo-state, given time. He seemed to be progressing in that regard quite nicely, drinking in virtual representations of his future (with no sign of VDTs[9]), at precisely the moment that Trinity arrived and rendered his efforts immaterial. But he did at least show that he still had the ability, as the One, to visualise his future path.

6.5 LOST LUGGAGE

That's *if* he derived his abilities from the same (lower case) source in and out of Mobil Avenue – he may have been visualising of his own volition or, some have suggested, he may have been reading support files and data that had been left on the platform by Rama Kandra.

Why would Sati need luggage, anyway? What would be in the suitcases and travelling bags? Clothes? Toys and games? If so, they're just programs – and the Merovingian negotiated the safe passage of just *one* program – Sati - not a pile of miscellaneous entertainment software. Besides, Sati seems more than capable of creating her own entertainment, literally. A sunrise, for instance. So what would programs need to take with them if travelling? Probably, something that allows them to retain a link with home, or business – to the Machine City. Ancillary files, possibly, that are required to actually allow them to travel. An emulator, perhaps. Neo could easily have accessed this information, or it may have accessed him...

*

7.0 THE ARCHITECT AND THE 1.SOMETHING%

> [The Oracle] stumbled upon a solution whereby nearly 99% of all test subjects accepted the program, as long as they were given a choice, even if they were only aware of the choice at a near unconscious level. While this answer functioned, it was obviously fundamentally flawed, thus creating the otherwise contradictory systemic anomaly that, if left unchecked, might threaten the system itself. Ergo, those that refused the program, while a minority, if unchecked, would constitute an escalating probability of disaster.
>
> - The Architect, from *Reloaded*

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karma police arrest this man he talks in maths he
buzzesLikeAfridge hes like a detuned radio.
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> - Radiohead, *Karma Police*

As the Architect explained, the system needs periodic correcting to keep it stable, similar to rebooting a computer that has been running for long periods. The Matrix program is subconsciously accepted by most of the inhabitants (99%). Those who do not accept the program have an inborn sense that something is awry – that their lives are being lived slightly left of centre. Something is wrong, but they can't quite figure out what. Now, we cannot simply assume that all of these people will necessarily get freed. It is just as likely that they will be assessed as 'insane' - disturbed individuals within the Matrix world. Some do eventually wake up, some are found by the Zionites and freed, others may simply kill themselves. After a time, the number of dissenting minds begins to rise as flaws in the Matrix programming grow. More and more minds begin to reject the system, triggering the 'One' program. You can view the 'One' program as a patch to correct the systemic anomaly that is beginning to threaten the stability of the Matrix. The 'One' program most likely seeks out the most dissenting logical mind it can find as a host. This person becomes the One and gains the ability to manipulate the Matrix. As a result, the One subconsciously seeks out the Source, the core of the Matrix. Upon arriving at the Source, the code is analysed and the patch to the Matrix is created and installed, thus reloading and stabilising the system.

It is curious that the Architect, a walking calculator with a exacting, precise way of speaking, chooses an imprecise and inexact calculation when quoting statistics. "nearly 99% of all test subjects accepted the program" – it seems an unlikely thing for the Architect to say. You'd expect him to state "9.8% of all test subjects...", for instance. And apart from being jarring, it also causes difficulties when attempting to calculate just how many potential rebels/people requesting a departure from Matrix 7.0 there actually are. On a planet populated by 6 billion people, decimal points mean a lot.

Still, we can only work with what we are given. The Architect's "nearly 99%" equates to around 66 million people. There are 250,000 people living in Zion and the Temple (at least on special occasions), looks like it's pretty full. It's unlikely that the city could cater for 264 times the current number of residents. Of course, a proportion of those people, at least in the pre-*Revolutions* past, would be killed or incapacitated by Agents. Now, with the war over, however, those who want "out" are free to go. But where?

There is, of course, no real evidence to suggest that there are 6 billion people living out their lives in the Matrix, as there are 6 billion people alive today. The Matrix may be very small in comparison – but that would require enormous processing power to maintain the illusion of 6 billion people every time any pod-person decided to 'travel abroad'. At some point, too, such a vast reduction in human life would have required an extraordinary act of genocide on the part of the machines. Agent Smith offers the best refutation of the 'Small Matrix' theory, when he looks out of an office window and comments on "billions of people just living out their lives... oblivious".

So, 66 million people – again, where will they go?

7.1 ZION

Lambert Wilson, who's character the Merovingian has never been to Zion[10], has said that he feels Zion is related in some why to the Prieure du Sion, or the Priory of Zion, a secret society that has connections with, among others, the Roscicrucians and the Freemasons. The primary purpose of the Priory is "to safeguard the treasure of the Crusades and preserve the Holy Grail". Granted, it's 'only' Lambert Wilson who said this. But you have to wonder who he might have been talking to...

One of the fascinating aspects of the Architect's (truthful, no doubt) claim that Zion had been destroyed five times before is the question of where the evidence of the destruction is. If 23 people started Zion all over again each time, did no-one notice that they were building on top of relatively fresh ruins? Was there a Planet Of The Apes-like Forbidden Zone hidden in the city? Was there always the possibility that one of the new Zionites would discover, perhaps in the rarely-visited engineering room, an artefact of the past?

Of course, perhaps Zion was repositioned after each reload. Or perhaps the machines rebuild Zion and the One and his 'disciples' move in to the prefab city. The One, like many a leader in the real world, would then have a responsibility to hide the truth, in the 'public interest'. Another issue that arises from the subject of re-population is a tricky problem for the One – that he/she cannot choose any other person who knows 'the truth' – so if Neo had chosen the door to his right, he would have also been knowingly putting Morpheus, the Kid, Zee, Link – and Trinity – to death.

7.2 ZION: THE TEMPLE

What is Zion's temple *for*?

That is – it is shown to be for public meetings, but how often do meetings of the scale shown in Reloaded take place? Not often, surely. So, the rest of the time the Temple is used for what? For prayer? Prayer to whom? To what? Is it possible that the Zionites still believe in a God, after such a large proportion of them have spent their lives bathing in deceit? After a hovercraft captain like Morpheus has shattered their entire belief system? What kind of God would allow *that* kind of life?

Let's assume that many Zionites have their own religion – the religion of The Prophecy. Perhaps the Temple is used by those that believe in the prophecy first and foremost, which is why Morpheus is so rapturously received, and Hamaan makes mention of the fact that Morpheus "hasn't spoken here in some time" - implying that he had done so regularly in the past, possibly as part of Prophecy-related prayers. Perhaps the chosen religion of Zion is a form of Manicheism, with added "Super-guy will save us all" dogma, to taste.

Lock is the problem, though. He's not a believer in the Prophecy. He's not a believer in much of anything, except the power of the military and his love for Niobe, and the latter could be considered dubious. So perhaps the temple is there for nothing more (or less) specific than Belief. Belief in the power of The One, or in God, or Buddha, or Mohammed, or in the spirit of humanity.

One common misconception that may be relevant here is a definition of 'temple'. It doesn't have to mean a place of religious worship. A temple can just as easily be a place that is simply reserved for functions of high value. For speech-giving, and for gathering in difficult times. For dancing.

7.3 ZION: SOME SINGULARITIES

7.3a HAMAAN

There were very few people, I'd submit, who didn't give pause when Councillor Hamaan met Neo in Zion. The dialogue seemed extraneous. It was a trifle... dull, perhaps. But no, it really wasn't. It had something that very little dialogue in the trilogy could lay claim to. It had *grace*. And it turned out to be extremely important to the story, in that it is the most obvious and direct reference in the trilogy to the most apparent aspect of the story – that man cannot live without machines, and vice versa. Neo's manner during the conversation is dismissive, perhaps even suspicious (as is the audience – just about everyone post-*Reloaded* thought that there was something rotten in the state of Zion, and that something was called Hamaan), but

we later find that it is the Hamaan's words that prompt Neo to renounce the Architect's threats – with the words "you need human beings to survive". Further, Hamaan demonstrates a Morpheus-like ability to find the good in the seemingly bad, when he tells Neo that insomnia is a sign that The One is "still human" and therefore a good thing.

Still, doubts remain. Those final moments in *Revolutions* when the Kid tells the Councillor that the war is over – does Hamaan look so stunned because he is letting the seeming impossible "sink in", or because he cannot believe that, in some way, he's ended up the 'losing' side?

7.3b MICHAEL KARL POPPER – "THE KID"

The Kid was another line away from become *Reloaded*'s own Jar Jar Binks, but redeemed himself greatly in *Revolutions*. Having become the first known human to self-substantiate, leaving the Matrix through will alone, his ambitions seem to be no more lofty than joining the Nebuchadnezzar and being near Neo[11].

Self-substantiation, far from being "impossible" in Trinity's words, is probably very common. But it's unlikely that there are many, or any, survivors. The miracle of the Kid is not that he found sufficient clarity of mind to truly see the world as false to the extent that he could leave it of his own volition – the miracle is that he was found by a hovercraft before his atrophied body dragged him deep into the sewers of the Power Plant. He had not, after all, taken a red pill, so a trace program was not possible.

Going back to the Architect's 1.something% - that percentage would include, say, some people suffering from 'delusions' (such as the detective that failed to find Trinity, obsessed with the Red Queen[12]), people who have dropped out from society, and a whole bunch of unhappy teenagers. There must surely be a sizeable number of that .something% who reject the program to the degree that they self-substantiate. Indeed, there is (almost) another example in the *Animatrix* – Dan Davis, the athlete in *World Record* who very nearly self-substantiates without actually having any doubts about reality – he simply reaches a peak of physical skill that disallows him to go any further without a glimpse of the real world beyond his own.

Perhaps as many as 1 in every 100 system rejecters go as far as to self-substantiate. And, until the Kid, 100% of those people died, or lived outside Zion at best. How did the Kid survive? That depends on the level of faith that you have in the One. Either there was a way for the crew of the Neb to find the Kid's body whilst he was still plugged in, without making actual contact (which is fine if you want to find a scientific explanation - but doesn't help if you factor in the point that the crew didn't do that with Neo) or – the One just knew where the Kid would be. He just *knew*.

The premium question about the kid formerly known as Michael Karl Popper, though, is one that we never had the opportunity to have answered in film – that is, could he do it again? As a 'wireless', pill-free escapee of the Matrix, does he have the ability, with practice, to self-substantiate in and out of the Matrix at anytime he wants? That would be a power that even the One didn't possess.

7.4 MATRIX V1.0: BACK TO THE GARDEN

Mention is made twice of the first, 'perfect' Matrix – first by Agent Smith to Morpheus in the first film, and then again by the Architect in *Reloaded*. Natural conjecture has led some to believe that Matrix v1.0, therefore, was an equivalent to, or the actual, Garden of Eden. If that was the case, in raises a number of interesting questions - not least the question of who the Architect *really* is – created our world, white beard...[13]

7.5 A SINGULAR SINGULARITY - THE MEROVINGIAN

The Merovingians (plural) were a Frankish ruling dynasty, circa 450-751 A.D, and supposed themselves to be descendants of Jesus Christ. Their historical record was somewhat different (unsurprisingly) to that of the orthodox Christian church. According to the Merovingians, Jesus the Nazarene survived his crucifixion and went on to father children with Mary Magdalene[14], and that lineage became the Merovingian family. It's been suggested that Jesus himself may be the first One in the Matrix timeline – the first anomaly that arose after the imperfect second version of the Matrix was loaded. The difficulty with that is the Merovingian

himself, who has "survived [Neo's] predecessors" – although that statement doesn't preclude the idea that the Merovingian may be, say, the son of Jesus. That also raises an interesting question about who Cain and Abel really are – or were, since Persephone shot Abel in the head, which shows a distinct lack of respect for history, if he *was* one of the sons of Adam[15].

Some have theorised that the Merovingian may be a former One himself, although since he is distinctly referred to as a program, and is unlikely to have the capability of surviving himself, that doesn't seem likely. What he *is*, however, is a philosophical inverse to Neo, as Smith is Neo's moral opposite. The Merovingian believes that the ultimate truth is not choice, but causality. He makes a powerful argument for this position when he says that choice is "an illusion, created between those with power, and those without" – which cannot fail to make the viewer consider just how much real 'choice' we are afforded by our leaders.

7.6 ON CAUSALITY

In a nutshell, the Merovingian believes that physiological and psychological antecedents predetermine all human action. He has good reason to believe this to be true – the world around him supports the theory, as does the literal machine 'mindset' of life based a binary foundation. In fact, the theory is only disproved once, or at least only by one functioning mind, human or otherwise – Neo's.

The theory, though, is only precise enough for the machine world and the lives of humans living through the Matrix. In Zion, or anywhere that humans are living and interacting without direct machine control, they are governed only by physics. At least, they are only *provably* governed by physics. There is no proof of the existence or non-existence of a higher power that controls humanity. Still, the machines represent the viewpoint of determinism, the tenet that every state of affairs is necessitated by all previous states of affairs; the humans represent the philosophy of indeterminism, the tenet that some states of affairs are unpredictable, regardless of previous states of affairs - that there is no equation to solve every problem.

To believe so unflinchingly in causality, as the Merovingian does, means that it is a natural progression for him to want the very device that would enable him to see exactly what is to come – the eyes of the Oracle. Instead, he gets Trinity's gun to his temple. "So beautiful she makes me suffer", indeed...

Of course, it turns out that the Merovingian was right – the eyes of the Oracle were key to the entire tale. Without their help, Neo would have not had the prompt that made him see the path to salvation.

7.7 WIFE OF THE MEROVINGIAN

Persephone, daughter of Demeter and Zeus and the mythological Queen of the Underworld, was tricked by her husband Hades into eating six pomegranate seeds, the power of which was to force her to remain in the Underworld for the rest of her days. Hades did not woo and seduce Persephone, but abducted her. In time, she came to feel love for her consort. Her mother, though, was full of rage and sorrow. That anger was taken out on the people of the Earth, which was subjected to great winds and bitter cold spells. It was Hercules that saved the inhabitants of Earth – by entering the Underworld and negotiating a peace of sorts – it was agreed that Persephone would divide her time between her mother and her husband. As a result, time that Persephone spends with Hades is marked by Winter, and time with Demeter by Spring.

> "It's cold... It's cold."

Thomas Anderson's last words, *The Matrix*

7.8 RAMA KANDRA: PLUS ONE

> Lead me from the unreal to the Real
> Lead me from the darkness to the Light
> Lead me from the temporary to the Eternal
> - English translation of *Navras*, from *Revolutions*

Hindu culture has a set of chronological ages known as Yugas, divided, like the seasons, into four. After each set of four Yugas, the world is destroyed and then re-created, including the re-creation of the same people. This, of course, is what occurs periodically to the Matrix.

Hinduism, a polytheistic religion, has three primary gods – all aspects of Brahman, who is supreme. The three gods are Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

- Brahma is the creator, as is the Architect, who seeks to balance equations.
- Shiva is the destroyer, as is the Oracle, who seeks to unbalance them.
- Vishnu is the preserver, who re-incarnates into a new avatar with every Yuga.

Neo is Vishnu, and he is Krishna – an avatar of Vishnu, the eighth re-incarnation of Vishnu, in fact.

The seventh re-incarnation of Vishnu is Râma Chandra.

> "For the salvation of the good, the destruction of the evil-doers, and for firmly establishing righteousness, I manifest myself from age to age."
> - Bhagavad Gita 9:11, the Upanishads

The first virtue of Lord Vishnu is his peaceful appearance. Râma Chandra, as conceived by the Hindu mind, represents the ideal mind. In *Revolutions*, too, Rama Kandra could be considered as an archetypal man of kindness – someone to respect. The irony of course is that the person we meet who we would most aspire to become is not a person at all, but a machine. Neo, comparable as well, realises upon meeting Rama that sentient programs can be (*must* be) respected as 'people' too. He realises that artificial intelligence does not hinder the ability to care – to love.

Neo, of course, meets, or at least sees, Rama Kandra prior to their first conversation at Mobil Avenue – at *Le vrai*, the Merovingian's restaurant. Later we discover that Rama is negotiating safe passage of his daughter Sati with the Frenchman. What is unclear is how the Oracle conspired to let Neo see this. She made it clear that Neo had to be at the restaurant at a precise time – was that to ensure that Neo saw Rama? Or was she attempting to ensure that they *didn't* see each other? Of course, the Oracle may have been trying to make sure that the trio arrived at *Le vrai* in time to see the Merovingian's cake work it's virtual magic, allowing him to meet with a lady in the toilets, which allowed Persephone to be annoyed by the special favours her husband was

receiving from another woman, which encouraged her to betray him, thus delivering the Keymaker into Neo's hands, and ensuring that Neo would meet the Architect...

The Oracle had obviously not factored in a meeting between Neo and Rama Kandra – she did not expect them to talk at *Le vrai*, and she could not have anticipated their meeting at Mobil Avenue. But if they had not met, if Rama had not shown Neo that machines were capable of love, would Neo have had sufficient understanding of the 'big picture' to arrive at the solution he did?

Perhaps it was fate. Or causality.

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8.0 CHOICE

> "The worst thing you can do is give up your God-given right to choose. For in it, you can choose not to choose. Therein is the final judgement. The illusion ceases and you awaken from your dream. Now the healing begins…"
>
> — Prince, on-line dialogue from *One Song*

> I decided to flip a coin
> Like either heads or tails would let me know if I should go
> Back to ship or back to jail
> So I hocked my sailor suit and I got a coin to flip
> It came up tails
> It rhymed with sails
> So I made it back to the ship.
>
> — Bob Dylan, *Bob Dylan's 115th Dream*

Nothing is random. This is the whole point behind Cause and Effect. Everyone knows that the laws of probability state that flipping a coin enough times will give you a likely result of approximately 50% per side landing 'up'. What people tend to ignore is that if you knew everything about the environment, air friction, weight of the coin, the velocity etc. then you have the power to know the effect of the coin flip from that which causes the coin to flip. Those with the power to know all therefore avoid randomness and can control everything. This is the Merovingian's argument in a nutshell.

Likewise, individual humans do not *really* have choice – we've created the illusion of choice because we do not know what causes us to do one thing rather than another. Given time, and a greater understanding of exactly how our brains work, we will be able to understand the process more clearly – and realise that there is no such thing as choice.

Another view is that human free will, the ability to choose, does exist – but that we are living out the moments within which we make our choices. The choices are already made, already exist, but we are currently directly within the moment in which we make them. So, we have always had choice, but simply weren't aware of it.

One of the challenges of resolving the trilogy was inherent to the central premise – *The Matrix* had/has relevant points to our lives – issues of control are intrinsic to us all, regardless of whether the controllers are machine civilisations or human-owned corporations. Morpheus' red pill/blue pill speech, before we actually knew the true nature of the Matrix, still had resonance to the lives of many people. Indeed, it was almost certainly the point that many people really sat up and started to take notice of the film.

But to resolve the trilogy in the way many people, Morpheus included, thought it should ideally end – the liberation of everyone from the power plant, and thus from the Matrix - would have meant that the resonance of the story in our own lives, on repeated viewing or as an on-going narrative, would be gone. The 'real life' issues of control and systems and slavery - in our world would have been solved in an instant in the Matrix. That would have been unsatisfying in a story that has been so affecting to so many people.

The original story concept had similar qualities to the Matrix itself - a great idea but one that could never be finished/resolved to the satisfaction of everyone involved, because the greatness of the concept had built-in flaws. Which is why an ambiguous ending was not just preferable, but essential.

The Matrix Online notwithstanding, the world after *Revolutions* is a place for our imaginations. Perhaps in the new Matrix, version 6.0, there are subtle differences to life that a) make it a better place to live and b) give a plainer and more direct choice to those with open minds. Perhaps a reloaded Matrix is one with less grids and straight lines - and more car parking spaces.

Prior to the reload, Smith asks Neo why he continues to fight. Is it for freedom? A sense of purpose? For love? Or peace? None of the above, Neo tells him. It is because I *choose* to fight. This line is key, not least

because of it's counter-implication: that the freedom to choose to do something implies the freedom to choose *not* to do it. Ultimately Neo chooses to do something that none of his predecessors did – or could have understood: He chooses not to fight.

> "In the beginning, the Human was made perfect in God's image. They had no need for knowledge. They were also given freedom of choice. The Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life are reflections of this freedom. The human is now a reflection of their choice. They could have simply chosen not to choose. God being centrifugal in nature, freedom was the CAUSE and choice was the EFFECT. In knowing their perfection made in God's image, there was no need to choose. In fact, there were NO NEEDS. There was only love in an all-knowing state - before the fall."
>
> - Prince, on-line dialogue from *One Song*

Standard Deviation 3.0: Trinity's Predestined Love

Despite Neo's fundamental belief in the power of choice, the most important part of his life was the result of predestination – Trinity was told that she would love The One, it was part of the prophecy. There was a moment when she thought that the prophecy may have not been true – in the subway after rescuing Morpheus, when she realised that she loved Neo, but that he wasn't the One (or so she thought). But ultimately she came to love him through the power of suggestion. She never would have considered, say, Apoc as a potential life partner, because there was never any suggestion of him being the One[16]. Where, then, was Trinity's moment of choice? The Oracle would say, I suppose, that Trinity had already made her choice – and that now she was simply seeking to understand it.

8.1 THE ORACLE'S STORY

According to Greek myth, Zeus charged two eagles with finding the centre of the Earth. He released one to the east and one to the west. They met at the Greek village of Delphi, then called Kastri, thus pointing out the centre of the earth.

Some time later a shepherd named Kouretas noticed that his goats acting in a peculiar way whenever they were near a particular chasm, which emitted fumes of some kind. People began to hear of the fumes, became curious, and eventually, after approaching the opening, found themselves falling into trances, and mumbling prophecies, ultimately resulting in some over-zealous individuals losing themselves completely in their trances and killing themselves by leaping into the chasm. At that point senior members of the village appointed a woman as official sibyl, or Oracle. A shrine was built, as was a house for the Oracle.

The advice of Greek oracles was usually unspecific and indeterminate, as a result of which their prophecies were only truly understood after the event to which they referred, the Oracle at Delphi included. Oracles used their influence to subtly control the actions of those they advised, thus exercising substantial power in Ancient Greece.

So, centuries before the birth of Christ, devout pilgrims made the arduous trek to Delphi to ask for advice from the famous Oracle, who was surrounded by fumes.

Alexa: Do you think maybe we ought to reprogram it?
Nonaka: No. We can't make slaves of them.
Alexa: ... because that would be simpler.
Nonaka: We won't beat the machines by making them our slaves - better to let them join us by choice.
Alexa: Make them believe that the right choice is the one we want them to make.
Nonaka: Alright. Yes, machines are tools. They're made to be used. It's their nature.
Alexa: To be slaves.
Nonaka: That's why we can show them a better world - why they convert.
Alexa: But that world we show them isn't real.
Nonaka: It doesn't matter.
Alexa: Well I'm afraid they'll figure out that we've made up the thing in our heads.
Nonaka: They can't tell the difference. To an artificial mind, all reality is virtual. How do they know that the real world isn't just another simulation? How do you?
Alexa: I know I'm not dreaming now because I know what it's like being in a dream.
Nonaka: So dreaming lets you know reality exists?
Alexa: No. Just that my mind exists. I don't know about the rest.

- Conversation in *Matriculated* [17]

8.2 NEO: ABSOLUTION

When he arrives at the Oracle's apartment building, Neo is still thinking in absolutes. "The Oracle knows what - *everything*?" he asks Morpheus. His mentor smiles, either (seemingly) empathic to the wisdom of the Oracle, or smiling at the naivety of his charge, as he tells Neo that she would say that "she knows enough". Neo, still lost in absolutes, then asks "and she's never wrong?". Morpheus the teacher again guides his pupil toward a unrestricted, unbound way of thinking: "Try not to think of it as right and wrong", he says. The irony is that Morpheus' patronising smile, if that's what it is, is entirely mis-placed. In the first instance the Oracle would almost certainly say that she *doesn't* know enough.

Standard Deviation 4.0: Beginning To See The Light Part 1 - The Potentials

As the giant rabbits of William F. Claxton's 1972 opus *Night of Lepus* move across the screen of the TV in the room adjacent to the Oracle's kitchen, the potentials sit and play – that is, they levitate toy bricks, and bend spoons. The Potentials – the Oracle's "kids" - are applicants for the candidacy of The One. Presumably captains from other ships had been freeing minds and bringing them to the Oracle just as Morpheus had done with Neo. It is interesting to speculate upon what happened to these kids after it was discovered that the One had been found. They were all obviously blessed with extraordinary abilities – perhaps they were to be groomed into a kind of Matrix 'Super-Squad'. It's easy to imagine that a group of gifted kids with super-powers called The Potentials would appeal to the comic book readers (and writers) in Larry and Andy Wachowski.

Standard Deviation 5.0: Beginning To See The Light Part 1 – Neo, Blinded

On his final journey toward crucifixion, Jesus was blindfolded and beaten by his enemies – Roman soldiers who taunted him, challenging the Nazarene to use his 'second sight' to identify his attackers. As Neo begins his final journey to 01, Bane/Smith attacks him, and during the fight Neo's eyes are scorched out of their sockets. Blind, he is mocked by Bane/Smith. But Neo finds that a second sight has been awakened, and his first words after being blinded are in fact "I can see you".

His blindness is foreshadowed twice – in the blindfold fight between Thadeus and Jue at the start of *Final Flight Of The Osiris*, and in the original movie script, when Trinity blindfolds Neo before taking him to meet Morpheus for the first time – ironically, the last journey of his pod-nurtured life. Again there are parallels

with Hindu culture - Neo's 'second sight' in the real world being analogous to Shiva's 'Third eye'. It's said that Shiva formed his third eye to restore order, and that fire emerged from it to re-create light. The third eye signifies inner perception, but when directed outward, is said to burn "all that appears before it"[18]. Shiva's third eye opens "to end all illusion".

8.3 THE ORACLE'S KITCHEN, AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE

In her book *Understanding The Dreams You Dream*, Ira Milligan describes the kitchen as "a symbol of the heart". It's a place that represents intention; desire; motive; ambition; planning.

It is in the kitchen that the Oracle keeps the Latin sign 'Temet Nosce' – "Know Thyself" – that is an important part of Neo's learning process at the end of his life prior to becoming the One, and at the end of his life *as* the One. The phrase 'temet nosce' is derived from the Greek 'gnothis auton', which appeared in Oracle's temple at Delphi – however, the literal/usual Latin translation of 'gnothis auton' would actually be 'nosce te ipsum', which suggests that the brothers may have had a more specific, possibly medieval, source in mind.

Things break in the Oracle's kitchen two out of the three times we visit it. The first time, Neo breaks a vase – an exercise in the causality so beloved of the Merovingian. The Oracle told Neo not to worry about it, and Neo - who is only human, after all – instinctively began to worry about it, which caused him to turn rather too hastily, and break the vase. She'd *told* him not to worry about it. And if he'd have done as she said, the vase would not have broken. Causality. The second time something breaks it's Smith doing the breaking, and he smashes the plate of freshly baked cookies with definite intent. The juxtaposition is of purpose vs. accident – and inevitability vs. choice.

*

THE MATRIX: ASCENSION

> "Do you hear that, Mr. Anderson? That is the sound of inevitability."
>
>   - Agent Smith, *The Matrix*

> "It is inevitable."
>
>   - Smith, *Reloaded*

> "It's impossible."
> "Not impossible - inevitable."
>
>   - Neo & Bane/Smith, *Revolutions*

> "You were right, Smith. You were always right. It was inevitable."
>
>   - Neo, *Revolutions*

9.0 TIME LOOPS AND FREE WILL

Much is made of the concept of time in the Matrix trilogy, although it has been explored less than some of the other more obvious issues, such as spirituality and choice.

An odd instance of the possible non-linear aspect of time in the Matrix is not in the cinema trilogy, but one of the Animatrix shorts – Detective Story, in which Trinity is sought by a Private Eye. The Trinity of the animated story is visibly much younger than the one of the films. What makes the story 'odd', however, is that it ostensibly seems to be set in the era of 1940's pulp storytelling. Whether this was a stylistic decision, or a more substantial remark on the movement of time in the Matrix is not revealed. But it's interesting to think that the film-makers may be implying that Trinity was possibly alive, or at least inhabiting the world, in 1940's America.

There is a precedent in the Matrix world for such an occurrence – Neil Gaiman's short story Goliath, published on the official Matrix web-site (and therefore approved by the brothers – although possibly not canon. In any event, it shares it's position on the periphery of canon with Detective Story). In Goliath, the central protagonist finds himself in a situation where he gets glimpses of the real world – an engineer in which is running programs "in accelerated mode", which means that while 9 years of the protagonist's (Matrix) life have gone by, in 'reality' only 37 minutes have passed. This manipulation of time would also explain why six months pass between the trace call at the start of the first film and the call at the end – when seemingly six months have not passed on-screen[19]. Of which more later.

But that suggests Real World programmers manipulating the software. Which is distinctly different to the abilities that Neo has. On the subject of Neo and time, of particular interest is the courtyard scene prior to the Burly Brawl, wherein Neo is told by the Oracle that he now has "the sight"; the ability to look at "the world without time" – and that it is only his lack of understanding that holds him back from seeing everything. The Merovingian, Neo's next port of call on the Oracle's instruction (the only time when she orders rather than advises), speaks too of time: "Who has time? But then if we do not ever take time, how can we ever have time?".

On first sight, it seems that the Oracle in particular, and the Merovingian indirectly, are suggesting that Neo, and perhaps others, have the ability to actively manipulate time. Perhaps Neo had already demonstrated this – stopping the Agents' bullets in the corridor outside room 303 in mid-air. Whether this is a manipulation of time, however, or of physics (or 'just' of software) is a matter for debate.

Could/can Neo move independently of time within the Matrix? Could he freeze time as Morpheus does in the construct simulations? Could he speed up the computational processes of the Matrix beyond the processing power of the machines? If he can stop bullets, can he also stop rainfall? If so, can he send the rain drops back upwards? If *so*, can he reverse the advancement of life as well as rain?

The problem with all this is simple, though – Neo is looking at the world *without* time - so there is no time for him to manipulate. Time is no longer represented by the passage of measured units to Neo - it's a Moebius strip.

German Professor, mathematician and astronomer August Ferdinand Möbius discovered the so-called Moebius strip, or band, in 1858. A Moebius strip is a two-dimensional surface which only has one side – a representation of which is easily (and frequently) constructed by taking a rectangular strip of paper and joining the two ends of the strip together so that it has a 180° twist. Using a marker, it becomes possible to start at a given point on the surface and trace out a path that passes through the point which is seemingly on the other side of the surface from the initial point[20]. If you cut a Moebius band down the middle, say along the line you've drawn with the marker, the strip increases in size, with different aspects and angles touching. The thinner you cut it, the more complicated and fractal-like the band becomes. This, potentially, is how Neo sees what we call time – in loops.

The last time they meet, the Oracle famously tells Neo that "Everything that has a beginning has an end". However, in a world without time, there is no beginning nor end. So on the face of it the Oracle's two statements to Neo are contradictory.

All of which begs the question – could/can Neo travel *through* time?

The Oracle's suggestion that Neo had/has a different (and possibly unique) view of time brings to mind Einstein's special theory of relativity. Newton supposed that we all experience time in the same way, but Einstein's special relativity shows that time is elastic. And "elastic" suggests "malleable". Your perception of, and experience in, time will differ to mine. This is demonstrated, simply, by movement. A famous theory called the Twins Effect suggests that if one half of twin brothers left the Earth at the speed of light and returned ten years later, he would return nine years younger than his sibling. Although this idea, that one man can effectively travel nine years into the future of another, sounds far-fetched but is true and provable. Similar things happen, albeit on a vastly reduced scale (billionths of a second, rather than years), every time you travel on an aeroplane.

Einstein's special theory only allows for forward time travel, however (although it doesn't suggest backward time travel is impossible). Theories regarding reverse travel were the speciality of Austrian mathematician Kurt Gödel, who worked with Einstein in the 40's. Gödel discovered that, if you are willing to allow for the hypothetical notion that the universe is rotating, it would be possible for an object to travel in a certain closed loop in space – and actually arrive 'back' at its starting point before it left. Loops in space may well act as loops in time. If that is so, then Neo would certainly be capable of travelling along and through those loops. Of course, the other issue is whether or not these loops were actively used in the Matrix anyway – by the machines. The backdoor structures may have been visual representations of these time loops – and it would certainly explain how Neo managed to travel from a relatively innocuous (though heavily guarded) building 'directly' into the Architect's chamber.

Finally, it may be that time (our time, not Matrix-time) works the way it does because it's part of the calculating power of a processing mechanism – what we call nature. Scientists and philosophers don't know what that power is for (some theorise that it is tied to consciousness, or possible the origins of life). But of equal interest is *why* nature has the capability – the most likely answer is "because nature is a kind of super-computer, capable of processing large chunks of information". Metaphorically, that's certainly true. But literally? Well, perhaps.

9.1 NEO AND THE SELF

If Neo is looking at a world without time, of course, then, post-*Revolutions*, he can't be dead, because ultimately the only thing that can cause death is the passing of time.

It's difficult to know what to make of Neo's exit from view in the machine city at the end of the trilogy, dragged away while a boy soprano sings (music which, to the brothers, suggests "the plight of humanity"). The obvious thought is that he's dead. Most people I know who saw the film and choose not to think of it too deeply afterward simply assume that he died. But he's died before and he didn't stay dead then.

Like Jesus, and the Buddha, Neo stood at the gates of his choice of afterlife and turned away. He decided to return to the physical world, because the work of redemption was continuing. He came back to address the machines, just as Jesus came back to address his disciples. But Jesus' motives were entirely altruistic, as were the Buddha's, when he refused to enter the gates of Nirvana. Neo? Well, it could be argued that he wanted to return for Trinity. Now, that is a powerful reason, and certainly understandable, but it's not entirely selfless. And, when he meets with the Deus Ex Machina in Zero One, he does it again. The Deus asks Neo what he wants. "Peace", Neo replies. Most people have taken this to mean an end to war. That is not necessarily so.

First of all, the machine is specific. It does not ask "what do you want in general terms" or "what do you want, on behalf of your species". It asks "What do **you** want" – specifically to (the) one person about the desires of that one person. This is a distinction that we may not make, as humans, because we like to think that we are interpretative, that we are able to discern deeper meaning from brief exchanges. If we didn't think like that, some of us would not concentrate on the Matrix trilogy so. But not so machines. They're more prone to direct questioning, followed by specific answers. Secondly, Neo says "peace" - not "an end to war". In this day and age, we presume the word 'peace' to be the exact opposite of 'war'. Again, that is not necessarily so.

My idea of peace is not the opposite of war. My idea of peace is a night asleep with no intrusions, conscious or subconscious. No worries about finances or relationships or, indeed, whether we are at war with another nation or not. The peace I feel is (or; would be) an entirely selfish one. All wars would end because I wanted to sleep, not the other way around.

The machines may well have interpreted Neo's words (rather, word) in the same way. If that is the case, he may well be dead. But that presumes that the machines categorically know that death=peace. If there is any question of an after-life, be it Christian, Buddhist or electro-magnetic, death cannot be presumed to equal peace. Whatever the beliefs of the machines, Neo cannot be dead. If he was, there would be no need for an end to hostilities with the Zionites. That simply wasn't part of the deal. So for Neo to achieve his wish for peace, the machines may well have had to end the war. This (the end to the war) is, of course, something that Neo explicitly said he wanted – in a way. The Oracle suggested that she wanted "the same thing" that Neo did. Neo replied "an end to the war". She nodded. Which confirms that was *her* desire, but we only know that Neo correctly presumed her desire, not stated his own.

So, the Deus ex Machina gave Neo what he wanted, and the inhabitants of the Matrix were the recipients of a fortuitous side effect. Whether that side effect will prove to be long lasting, or permanent, depends on both the positive effects that it may or may not have on the previously warring factions, and the length of Neo's life, or consciousness. But in a mind that perceives a world without time, how can consciousness ever end?

9.2. NEO A.D

> "The function of the One is now to return to the Source, allowing a temporary dissemination of the code you carry, reinserting the prime program."
> - The Architect, *Reloaded*

So, what are we to make of the current location of Neo? Not just his body, but his intellect, his mind, the source of all his strength? For want of a better word, his 'soul'? There's little doubt that the assimilation of Smith, and then the extraction of the Smith program from Neo's corporeal self, will have left an imprint, and likely damage. But there's no reason to presume that it killed Neo. The process may have changed him so significantly, however, that he is no longer "irrevocably human", as the Architect called him. From the point that the Smith program exited his body, he may have become more cerebral software than flesh-and-bone hardware. Certainly the machines have the ability to upload his consciousness into the mainframe. This is what the Architect wanted to do all along.

But what of this code that Neo carries? It obviously isn't linked with his life-force, as the Architect was originally proposing that Neo rebuild Zion after the Matrix Version 6.0 was loaded. It's been suggested that the code is a program that was attached to the newly born (or rather – grown) 'Thomas Anderson' and was

carried by Neo, both when he was in his pod and after he was set free. This may be what the Architect was speaking of when he commented that "the process" had altered Neo's consciousness, although he remains "irrevocably human". This humanity is demonstrated not in his desire for the freedom of mankind, but in his conscious, selfish desire to choose – to choose Trinity, and to choose peace. There is bio-research currently taking place which aims to safely insert mechanical prosthesis into test subjects with physical challenges – electronic devices that act as 'sight' for the blind, for example. These devices interact with the nervous system and lead to the notion that electro-neural interactions are very possible. The code that Neo carries may either act as SpyWare and simply monitor his life both in and out of the Matrix – an information gathering exercise for the prime program – or it may be Neo's opposite. It may be that it is this code that somehow 'tainted' Smith. Later, it could very well have been this software that caused Neo to 'shut down', creating a .tmp file in RAM – i.e. in Mobil Avenue.

9.3 THE MIRROR CRACK'D: MATRIX REFLECTIONS

> "All is clear, I understand everything now."
> - Brunnhilde crying to Wotan in Valhalla

In dreams mirrors, or rather the reflection that you see in them, most often refer to truth, or wisdom – an understanding of the self.

Reflections in the Matrix trilogy serve as reminders that the matrix world is only one reality out of many. According to the Wachowski brothers, "Reflections in general are a significant theme in the movie. The idea of worlds within worlds..." Many times, we see reflections in Morpheus' sunglasses, most famously during the red pill/blue pill scene, when Neo can be seen at the moment of choice. According to the brothers this "represents the two lives Neo is leading. In the left lens we see the blue pill and Thomas Anderson, and in the right lens, we see the red pill, and Neo."

Shortly after that scene, we see Neo sat in a chair while the Neb crew attempt to locate his position in the Power Plant. He turns to his right and sees his own reflection in a mirror. Seeing, of course, just the one image (of who? Perhaps of Thomas Anderson...), the image seems to split, and then melt away, and when Neo touches it, the reflection itself seems to take over the mirror, and then spread to his body. This, of course, may be representative of 'Neo' finally taking full control of the Thomas Anderson avatar. It may also be some kind of pre-manifestation of his power – the liquid mirror entering his mouth may have been his first 'lucid dream' of the tube that had been down his throat since he was 'born', in the real world.

The 'melting' mirror could also have a semi-scientific representation – as a way to illustrate that the carrier signal was breaking down. This would only affect Neo's perception – and no-one else in the room seems at all distracted by the liquefied mirror. They were more concerned, of course, with removing Neo from the system, whilst simultaneously ensuring that a) the system thought he was dead and b) he didn't go into arrest and actually die.

Throughout the trilogy, Neo (or Thomas Anderson) is repeatedly waking up – either literally or metaphorically. When he is not, he is moving with celerity, as all the Matrix warriors are wont to do. In cars, on trains, flying through the air – perpetually on the move, it seems. However, it is when he is stationary, when he is immobile, that he learns the most. It is when he is immobile that he makes realisations about his path. After the final conflict with Smith, Neo left us the way he joined us – unconscious, perhaps processing information, no longer with a splinter in his mind, but instead looking at a world without time – and, perhaps, getting ready for the final explosive entry into the Matrix – this time, armed with knowledge. It's a scene that some think we have already witnessed... in 1999.

Standard Deviation 6.0: Every End Has Another End

A fascinating piece of speculation is the idea that the phone call Neo makes at the end of the first film[21] takes place, chronologically, *after* the events of Revolutions. The supposition is based on the following timeline:

19.02.98	Trinity speaks with Cypher from Room 303 of the Heart O' The City Hotel
...	Neo is released from the Matrix (and is bald)...
...	Morpheus tells Neo: "You believe it's the year 1999, when in fact it's closer to 2199."
...	Neo dies, rises from the dead, wakes up from onboard the Nebuchadnezzar - and still has very short hair on the head.
18.09.99 [one day short of 19 months later]	Neo make telephone call to the System, from within the Matrix.

Just by factoring in Neo's rate of hair growth (and presuming that he doesn't shave it, since he doesn't in *Reloaded/Revolutions*[22]), there seems to be some long time between the short-haired 'birth' of Neo and the telephone call date. It's possible this time encompasses all of the events of the two sequels, and that the chronological end of the story sees Neo loose in the Matrix, and telling the people that they, for the first time in their lives, have a real choice.

Other nebulous 'evidence' comes in *Reloaded*: Morpheus tells Councillor Hamaan that "In the past 6 months we have freed more minds than in 6 years"... which implies that Neo became the (active) One at the beginning of those six months, which allows the phone booth scene to play after *Revolutions*. Perhaps most compelling is Neo's tone. He never sounds as confident during the two sequels as he does when speaking in the booth – except when he emphatically tells the Deus Ex Machina that the won't fail to stop Smith – *before* the phone call? Finally, there's a strange line in the phone call – "I can feel you now..." which seems to be at odds with the Neo of *Reloaded*, who is asked what he can see, not what he can feel, at *Le vrai*, and who is surprised that he can feel the Sentinels just prior to his coma.

It's a nice idea[23]. The strongest counter-argument, however, is from the Architect - or rather, from the screens in his room. They show the phone call scene, a minimum of 12 hours before it could have actually taken place based on the above time-line. Ah well.

...*Unless* the Architect is not watching past events in the Matrix, but reading a part of Neo's code – a code which would, perhaps, show all sorts of non-sequential events taking place in the mind of a man who can see the world without time...

10.0 THE DAY AFTER THE REVOLUTION: MATRIX RECONCILIATION

> Oracle: Usually a program chooses exile when it faces deletion.
> Neo: Why would a program be deleted?
> Oracle: Maybe it breaks down. Maybe a better program is created to replace it
> - happens all the time, and when it does, a program can either choose to hide
> here, or return to The Source.
> Neo: The machine mainframe?
> Oracle: Yes. Where you must go. Where the path of The One ends.
> <div align="right">- Neo & The Oracle, Reloaded</div>

> Everything that has a beginning has an end, Neo.
> <div align="right">- The Oracle, via Smith, Revolutions</div>

As the climactic rainy brawl, dubbed the Super Burly Brawl by the Wachowski brothers, begins, we see Smith and Neo ready themselves, closing their fists in a manner reminiscent of the subway fight in the first film. Then all Hell breaks loose, as the One and his opposite clash for the final time. Eventually, Neo triumphs, through a combination of Loki-like craftiness and Buddha-like assent. Adaptation and improvisation, augmented by belief. It was over.

There has been a good deal of debate over the manner of Neo's 'victory', and the fight that precedes it – specifically, *why* and *how* Neo beat Smith. Another interesting issue is *who* beat Smith – perhaps it wasn't Neo at all.

The *why* is easiest – Neo beat Smith because Smith had total control of the Matrix, would very quickly spread to 01, and then would be in a position to destroy all remaining life, human and machine alike. *How* he beat Smith is a little more tricky, if you'll excuse the pun. The sequence of events:

- Neo allowed Smith to assimilate him, whilst
- Neo was connected directly to the Source.
- Smith therefore had no choice but connect to/return to the Source, where
- Smith, a redundant program, was deleted.

The *who* is more difficult. Those that don't necessarily accept the above, who saw only a discharge of light from Smith in the Matrix, then a similar discharge from Neo in the machine city, question whether it was Neo that stopped Smith at all – they feel that, technically, it was the Machines. Neo was just a method of transport. Although that sounds like pedantry, there is a valid point behind it – that if Neo merely acted as a transport mechanism, surely anyone could have done the same. Morpheus, say, or Niobe, even the Kid, could have connected directly with the Source, been assimilated by Smith, and ended the war.

Firstly, it's debatable whether a significant decision maker in this process would have accepted the theory that any pod-born person connected to the Source could have delivered Smith – the Deus Ex Machina. Neo scared the machines. He, and only he, had managed to consistently confound them in ways no other human, and no other One, had ever managed. Even if Morpheus or Niobe or the Kid had managed to even get to 01, it's likely that the Deus would have killed them outright. This, of course, is without even considering how anyone else other than Neo would have even known to travel to the machine city – it was Neo that had the visions of the tram-lines, for instance. Crucially, he also *believed* he could make it to the city. Who else would have had such unwavering faith? The Kid, possibly, given time. No-one else.

Secondly, and definitively, only Neo could deliver Smith because only Neo was the One. That is, only Neo was the One, *except Smith*. Again, the Oracle said that the Source was "Where the path of The One ends" – and Smith was an intrinsic part of the One. Neo alone connecting to the Source was not enough – and Smith being delivered by anyone else would not have defeated him. Most likely, all that would have been delivered was the machine mainframe *to* Smith, giving him the ability to spread throughout the real world. The prophecy was right all along. Morpheus said "Once the One reaches the Source, the war should be over" - and it was, when all constituent parts of the One, i.e. both Neo *and* Smith, were connected to the Source.

10.1 SMITH: MINUS ONE

> ARMITAGE: The disturbance in cyberspace... It's an A.I.
>
> CASE: (bitter chuckle) Right. And no one would take on an A.I.... If they had a choice.
>
> MOLLY: What's an A.I?
>
> ARMITAGE: An Artificial Intelligence. A computer system that's developed the capacity for sentient thought. They're dangerous and totally unpredictable.
>
> CASE: First sign of free will, Sense/Net usually slags 'em.
>
> ARMITAGE: This one's different. No one can trace it. It's out there somewhere in the matrix and it's growing stronger... infecting other computer systems like a virus.
>
> - *Neuromancer*, by William Gibson

Smith's motives, and purpose, always seemed to be very fuzzy and most unlike an analytical machine. This is best demonstrated when analysing his 'ambition'. Like many humans in this world, he often seems without a genuine sense of purpose; a long-term goal that can be described or visualised. Many of us define our goals in vague terms (I want more money/to be happy/to be comfortable) without being specific about what is required to achieve them beyond equally vague milestones (I need a better job/a wife and children/a new sofa). Smith does this too. When interrogating Morpheus he tells us that he wants to be free. His definition of 'free' at that moment in the story must be (or at least include the possibility of) deletion – the machine equivalent of death. Yet that is what he wants. *However*, when Neo graciously offers him this very thing at the end of the film, Smith chooses, instead, exile. His definition of freedom seems to have changed – he even thanks Neo for setting him free the next time they meet.

Did Neo overwrite the part of Smith's program that kept free will in check? Or was there already some element of rebellion in Smith that Neo simply exacerbated? Smith seems convinced that his new abilities, and insurrection, are a result of the hallway encounter. But perhaps they are not. Perhaps Smith was self-reinstated 'simply' as an reaction to Neo's similar resurrection. In a world of zeroes and ones, and One, it makes sense that there should be a '–1' to counterbalance things. The Oracle said as much.

> "See, it is I who created the blacksmith
> who fans the coals into flame
> and forges a weapon fit for its work.
> And it is I who have created the destroyer to work havoc"
>
> - Isaiah 54:16
> *[Smith's car number-plate at the start of* Reloaded *is IS 5416]*

One of the most contentious aspects of Smith's new-found abilities[24] was also the most ironic – the fact that he could now reproduce himself – like the humans he was repulsed by in the first film, he now had the ability to breed. But how did Smith take over other avatars? When he was an Agent he had a similar ability, but no Agent could replicate itself like Smith. By the time of the final meeting with Neo, it seems that Smith had redecorated the entire world with himself. But *how*? Hugo Weaving felt that Smith had "become like a computer virus. And I think that's actually what's happening. He's taking over other programs." That's one theory, and the spread pattern of a virus (absorption-entry-replication-assembly-release) is somewhat similar to the Smith's formula for spreading, but he was more of a cancer than a virus, in that he had been altered from a state that was somewhat 'normal', and was now spreading without reason, purpose or control[25].

His incessant replication also makes one wonder about the nature of his own 'self-control' – that is, his ability to share information across avatars of himself. Specifically – which one of all those Smiths, standing in the rain, was the 'real' Smith? The 'original' Smith? It wasn't the one that fought Neo – that was the Oracle's overtaken avatar. Immediately after overtaking the Oracle, the Smith that seemed to be in charge up to that point visibly recoiled as the new Smith laughed. Immediately after the assimilation of Neo, the Oracle/Smith looked to the new recruit for advice – "is it over?" – as if he was yielding command. This suggests some kind of Borg-like hive mind, but with a 'Queen' who travels across avatars. This is another reason that Smith is not virus-like: A virus will not share information with their replicants.

Smith *does* share information, however, with Bane. One major difference between Smith and Bane, appearance aside, is the latter's propensity for self-harm – which is really just Smith trying out an experience that was previously unavailable to him (or, Smith attempting to analyse his 'circuitry'). But that's a diversion from the real difference – Bane is alone. He can't replicate. As a result, if he had been given time, Bane-Smith may have learnt self-control, and humility, which Smith would never do in any other circumstance. We have to assume that Bane (that is, crew-member Bane, the original) was a 'good guy' and some of his goodness must have still lived somewhere in Smith-Bane. After all, unlike all the assimilations in the Matrix, Bane wasn't an avatar.

In the same way as Neo may have over-written part of Smith's program, Smith may have left some kind of 'imprint' on Neo that affected the latter's actions. Consider the similarities in their lives and 'resurrections':

Post-M1 Smith	Thomas Anderson/Neo
He ignored the rules because he felt "compelled to disobey"	He had "a problem with authority"
After being 'killed' by Neo, he was supposed to be erased, but wasn't.	After being 'killed' by Smith, he was supposed to stay dead, but didn't.
After being 'killed' his return is accompanied by a new-found ability to manipulate the Matrix on a larger scale than anyone else bar Neo.	After being 'killed' his return is accompanied by a new-found ability to manipulate the Matrix on a larger scale than anyone else bar Smith.

One ability that Neo seems to have exclusively is that he dreams of events that occur in the Matrix, and later he dreams of events in the real world, when he is *in* the Matrix (or, at least, in Mobil Avenue). This ability may be directly connected to Smith's presence in these places. Smith may be the conduit.

Back to the subject of Bane – questions have been raised on-line about him, specifically relating to what some people see as character or narrative inconsistencies. For instance: We know why Neo was in a coma – he'd "touched the Source" following his encounter with the Sentinels – but why was Bane-Smith? Another issue is: How did Bane-Smith survive the Sentinel attack, when all around him died? The Sentinels would have known him only as another human. They had no way of knowing that Smith was 'in' there. In fact, if they *had*, they would have been doubly sure to kill him.

The two issues may be connected. Firstly, we have no evidence that Bane-Smith ever touched the Source, or was capable of such a thing, but neither do we have evidence that that he didn't. It may be that he stopped the Sentinels in the same way Neo did. It may be that the premature EMP that went off *was* Bane-Smith. Following that, like Neo, he fell unconscious. Why is he still alive when everyone else on the ships is dead? Well, again, we don't know for sure that they are. I don't think there's any guarantee that the Sentinels actually killed every crew member anyway. It's possible that some of them, if they survived the crashes, could conceivably be hiding on the surface.

Standard Deviation 7.0: Jacob Of The Gnosis

> Old Woman at Zion: Neo, please. I have a son, Jacob, aboard the Gnosis.
> Please, watch over him.
> Neo: I'll try.
>
> — dialogue from *Reloaded*

Jacob, for instance, may be alive. Neo may even have found a way to 'watch over him' (indeed, depending on Neo's current state post-*Revolutions*, he may be watching over everyone, in one way or another). Jacob may be making his way back to Zion, or building a new life on the surface with other survivors. He may not be aware that the war is over, or he may believe that Zion has fallen. But the point is that he *may* be alive, a survivor of the Sentinel attack.[26]

And if Jacob survived, there's no reason that Bane couldn't have done the same, but just happened to be the one survivor that the Hammer noticed during what Roland, after all, admitted was only a "quick pass".

Another interesting question, one that the Oracle may well describe as a noodle baker, is what happened to the Bane *avatar*? Smith assimilated the avatar, then left the Matrix. When he did this (involuntarily) at the end of Revolutions, he left the avatars (say, of the Oracle or Sati), behind. What happened to the one 'belonging' to Bane? Is there a lifeless pile of virtual skin next to a telephone somewhere? Another noodle baker concerning Bane - how would Smith's destruction inside the Matrix have affected Bane if he (Bane) hadn't been decapitated?

10.2 THE IMMOVABLE OBJECT VS. THE IRRESISTIBLE FORCE

In summary, then, Neo and Smith had become inter-dependent. Each needed the other to live – and possibly to die. It was impossible for one to destroy the other. If Neo had no stopped and allowed Smith to merge with him, if they had continued to just fight each other, they would still be fighting now. As Neo said, the problem was choice – neither could 'win' without the other choosing to 'lose'.

The code that was carried by the anomaly, that needed to be re-inserted to avoid a "cataclysmic system crash" as the Architect put it, was no longer carried by Neo alone – but by the whole anomaly – Neo-Smith. When Smith returned to the Source, via Neo who was already connected, the machines had both the means to end the Smith threat (he was returning as an exiled program first and foremost), and the full code of the anomaly – as both beginning (Neo) and end (Smith). With the entire code (re)inserted into the prime program, the reload finally took place – Matrix 7.0, a more peaceful and balanced computer-generated dream world.

10.3 MATRIX: SYMBIOSIS – OR, MORPHEUS WAS WRONG

THE FOG comes
on little cat feet

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

- The Fog, by Carl Sandburg

Morpheus never seemed to fully appreciate just what it would take for his prophecy to be fulfilled. As long as the Matrix existed, he said, "the human race can never be free". But if the Matrix did not continue to exist, at least for the lifetimes of many of those plugged in, billions of members of the human race would die. It wasn't possible for them all to just wake up. Apart from the practicalities of where they would live, what they would eat, and such-like, Morpheus himself said that many were over-dependent, on the Matrix – he described them as "hopeless dependent".

Perhaps Morpheus saw all those minds as collateral damage. Perhaps he is not entirely satisfied with the way things ended up. But perhaps he needs to spend some time in the company of Councillor Hamaan, perhaps on the engineering level at Zion.

11.0 THE END: APOC - LIGHTS OUT

The Oracle at Delphi, when predicting for her visitors, was attended by a crow. According to legend, the crow was originally a white bird. The god Apollo transformed his colour, making him black to punish him for constantly being the bearer of bad news.

"Seems like every time we meet I've got nothing but bad news."
- The Oracle, speaking to Neo, who greeted her
as she fed a murder of crows, *Reloaded*

11.1 KALI YUGA

On both literal and symbolic levels, the time period that we witness in the trilogy corresponds with the *Kali Yuga* – the fourth and last of the Jindu Chatur Ugas. The Kali Yuga, in turn, has parallels with the period just prior to Christian apocalypse – and second coming.

During Kali Yuga "seldom will there be fruits and flowers on trees" (comparable, of course, to the 'scorched earth' of the real world). There will be excessive number of crows in comparison to other birds (the Oracle, as mentioned above, is feeding bread to crows just prior to her second meeting with Neo). Some beings will be "impostors", feigning purity (like humanity during the pre-war period of *The Second Renaissance*). Overall, throughout Kali Yuga, as throughout the trilogy, religion, truth, age, pity, energy and memory will all become emaciated and drained.

However, toward the end of Kali Yuga, Vishnu will incarnate and give refuge to all that are righteous – destroying all evil.

"The program 'Smith' has grown beyond your control. Soon he will spread through this city as he spread through the Matrix. You cannot stop him – but I can."
- Neo, addressing the Deus ex Machina, *Revolutions*

Finally, a child will be born, considered the saviour of one and all – who will emancipate the world from all miseries and create eternal happiness. The child will conclusively end the period of Kali Yuga and create a new cycle - Satya Yuga – "embellished with truth and beauty".

> "The child is important. I can't tell you why, but I believe one day, the child will change both our world and your world."
>
> \- The Oracle, talking to Ghost, about Sati[27] [*Enter The Matrix*]

As the Second Renaissance draws to a close, we see a happy child playing in the snow. It seems magical to him, and he turns to his parents with a sense of comfort when they call him. However, his face shows confusion, then fear, as he seems to "wake up" and recognise his parents as agents of the system. He seems to recollect being placed in his pod in the Power Plant.

This child is obviously important too. Is he the first person born into the Matrix to recognise it for what it really is? If so, that makes this happy child the original incarnation of the One[28]. So the cycle continues.

11.2 GOOD VS. EVIL – LINES BLURRED

In the end, it wasn't superman or Neo or The One that ended the war - it was just a human being called Thomas Anderson. After all that he endured, and despite everything that he could see and do, it turned out that, deep down, he *was* "only" human – and that was just what humanity needed.

The fact that the war ended in compromise rather than outright victory for one or the other party is apt, because both parties had done some downright despicable things, not least Man's decision to scorch the sky. I'd argue that the war had to end the way it did because, if anything, it was Man that was ultimately at fault. He'd created AI, after all, which created the Matrix. Therefore, Man had created his own prison, as well as the motive for building it. For either side to have won the war outright would have resulted in a imbalance of the equation of life – in a contradiction of the law of karma.

In Buddhist teaching, the law of karma says simply: "or every event that occurs, there will follow another event whose existence was caused by the first, and this second event will be pleasant or unpleasant according as its cause was skilful or unskilful."

> "I do not resent my karma – I am grateful for it."
>
> \- Rama Kandra, *Revolutions*

Neo's, or Thomas', actions provided balance between man and machine, levelled the field of action, and ultimately provided that which, deep down, all intelligence – man or man-made – yearns for. Peace.

<div align="center">*</div>

11.3 FINAL WORDS: I GIVE YOU MORPHEUS

The machines retreating, cheers ringing around the temple at Zion, the prospect of lasting peace for the first time in Morpheus' life. And, like many people in many situations over the years, he can't help but ask one question – "Is this *real*?"

Taken at face value, it's a straightforward question. But on more than one level, the man named after the God of dreams had a point. All that we have seen, in the 'real' world - "Is this *real*?"

Is it?

"The mind is its own place, and of itself can make a heaven of hell, and a hell of heaven."

- John Milton, *Paradise Lost*

<div align="center">***</div>

12.0 APPENDIX

[1] Ironically, in a rather poor simulation of the book – which is only 160 pages long in reality, whereas Thomas Anderson's version is much larger. In reality the chapter *On Nihilism* is at the end of the book, which is most certainly not where it's positioned in the 'simulation'.

[2] Geographically speaking, we know from the Zion archives that 01 is located in "the cradle of human civilisation", which suggests the land formerly known as Mesopotamia – modern-day Iraq.

[3] Nothing (else) of significant historical note happened on March 11th 1962. As far as I know.

[4] In *Reloaded* Neo, of course, does spend a little time all the way up in the mountains. Really.

[5] For an excellently told account of the story of King Nebuchadnezzar and the fiery furnace, try *The Fourth Man*, written by Johnny Cash and performed in two different versions on the albums *The Holy Land* (Columbia) and *Unearthed* (Def American). The story's in the Bible too, but you can't tap your toes to that version.

[6] Unlike the self-explanatory Vlad, the origin of Cujo's name is more obscure. It's probable that it's taken from the Southern American Indian word meaning "Indomitable Force", although just as likely to have been inspired by the Stephen King novel about Cujo the dog, who was bitten by a rabid bat.

[7] "Loop" is written on the front of the subway train that travels to and from Mobil Avenue – this 'destination' is shown on both the train in *Revolutions* and the train that narrowly misses Neo and destroys Smith's avatar in the original film.

[8] An interesting speculation here would have been what might have happened if he had decided to live the rest of his 'life' in the Matrix, after leaving the train station, as a rogue program – perhaps even without his body, as pure avatar.

[9] Virtual Delirium Tremens. Delirium tremens (known as "the DT's") are hallucinations (auditory; visual; tactile) that are commonly associated with alcohol withdrawal. The 'Virtual' component would seem to suggest that its a kind of jack-in/jack-out syndrome, perhaps arising because of trauma during the jack-in process.

[10] As far as we know. If he has, I think we can safely say that he would hate it, apart from the temple dancing...

[11] Neo seems to be disappointed that the Kid has made this decision. Then the sound of a metal door slamming in the background seems to be symbolic of both Neo's frustration and the Kid's 'closed mind' as to his potential.

[12] *A Detective Story*, *The Animatrix*.

[13] Interestingly, Freemasons refer to the creator of the universe, God, as 'The Great Architect'.

[14] In a nice cinematic twist of fate, in his film *The Passion Of The Christ* Mel Gibson gave the role of Mary Magdalene to Monica Bellucci, who plays the Merovingian's wife Persephone in the Matrix sequels.

[15] During the scene that Persephone shoots Abel, the TV in the background is showing Terence Fisher's *The Brides Of Dracula* – a reference to Monica Bellucci appearing as one of the brides in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* in the early 1990's.

[16] That we know of. There *is* a suggestion that another crew member may have been considered to be the One by Morpheus – Cypher. In the original script Cypher points out to Neo that this wasn't the first time Morpheus thought he had found the One. "If Morpheus says you can fly, I wouldn't go jumping out any windows to find out if he's right", he tells Neo. Shortly after, we cut to the restaurant scene, which begins with the line "That's what he said to me nine years ago", uttered by Agent Smith, by Cypher.

[17] Substitute Alexa/Nonaka for Oracle/Architect and 'Machine' for 'human' for a glimpse into a possible past conversation...

[18] Fire imagery is used extensively during the scene in 01, as it is on the other occasion when Neo is close to the Source – when he leaves a burning trail behind him, symbolic of his rage, on his way to rescue Trinity. The animation company Madhouse, the creators of *Akira*, were asked to prepare a custom reel of explosions for the brothers – who were interested in the concept that natural phenomena - weather, water, flames – is often depicted in anime as intelligent – as characters in their own right.

[19] Although many would argue that, given the time it would take firstly to rebuild Neo's atrophied muscles (which in some subjects can take up to 24 months to achieve, say, step-like exercising), then to return to Zion and repair the Neb after the extensive damage caused by sentinels, that 6 months isn't long *enough*.

[20] In fact, it was not Möbius that first discovered the band. True credit should go to Johann Listing, who both discovered the object, and published his findings, before Möbius.

[21] On, incidentally, the same road, Pitt Street in Sydney, as the Super Burly Brawl later takes place.

[12] All this may have panned out differently if the brothers had chosen an actor other than Keanu Reeves for the part of Neo – Reeves doesn't suit a shaven head too well whereas Ewan Macgregor, for instance, does.

[23] Another suggestion that has been made regarding chronology is that the animated short *Matriculated* may be set after the movie trilogy - a glimpse into the real world post-*Revolutions*, when humans are attempting to get distrustful machines 'on-side'.

[24] The *most* contentious is a question that has been asked more often on-line than any other that I've seen, namely: where the hell did he suddenly get the ability to *fly*?

[25] Smith would undoubtedly argue that he had purpose – to end life. Inasmuch as that is purpose, it is one that he would share with a cancer.

[26] Visit http://www.fanfiction.net/read.php?storyid=1816944 for faux-philosophical fan-fiction on this subject.

[27] In medieval India, *sati* was the name of the practice of burning a widow at the funeral pyre of her husband, as a mark of her loyalty. Some women willingly followed their husbands to the cremation pyre, others were forced. All were burnt alive.

[28] There are other possible 'cameos' in the *Animatrix* of characters who appear, or are referenced, in the movie trilogy. These include: The machine that insisted we hand over our flesh during *SRII* speaks like a prototype Deus ex Machina; in the same short, the Narrator shows a motherly protection toward the aforementioned child when he is in his pod – a maternal gesture that could be suggestive of the 'Mother of the Matrix' – the Oracle, possibly in a different shell; and in *A Detective Story*, it's interesting to speculate who the missing detectives are. Could one of them - dead, crazy, or disappeared - be the Trainman?

12.1 THE UNWITTING PARTICIPANTS

Ideas, inspiration, and entire chunks of philosophical data come from, but are not limited to, the following fabulous minds: 3seas, Archimedes, bEagle, W. Keith Beason, Monika Belloochiecoochie, Thomas Bulfinch, Cap'n Stevie, Stephen Cheung, Coz, Death Eater Dan, Diaspora, Dina, Steve Dufour, Frances Flannery-Dailey, furiosity, Greg Garrett, Gengon, Sean Greenberg, Jared, Agent Jones, JPMIII, Gary Kennedy, Kryptcom, Steve Lee, Lord-Data, Lotus Siva, Agent Martin, Patrick Meaney, the mighty Melloccino, Mike Kovach, MissFiction, moongateclimber, Feek O'Hanrahan, Hannah Ovnat, ptmvx, PouchCotato, Rainbows, Simon Robbins, Sandman, Scorpio, Chris Seay, Steve Silberman, Soy Bomb, St.Nail, Brian Takle, unholy Trinity, Velouria75, Rachel Wagner, WhiterabbiT, William Travis, Wry, XNoSpOoNX, John Young, Tracey Zoeller and Zygote. Edited by Gavin Smith. Please e-mail me if you spot typos, or if you want to call me a pretentious geek, or for any other reason – gsmith@slipgate.demon.co.uk

Picture investigation and Photo Shop adaptation by Obadia.

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The Matrix was created by Larry and Andy Wachowski. But you knew that.

THE
MATRIX
REFLECTIONS