

THE MATRIX (1999) __ 10/10

Emotional fuel for world liberation

Written and Directed by Andy Wachowski and Larry Wachowski

Keanu Reeves ...	Neo
Laurence Fishburne ...	Morpheus
Carrie-Anne Moss ...	Trinity
Hugo Weaving ...	Agent Smith
Gloria Foster ...	Oracle
Joe Pantoliano ...	Cypher

"As long as the Matrix exists, the human race will never be free." — Morpheus

This review is the third of four commentaries that suggest a general approach to healing our world. The book I just reviewed, *The Secret behind Secret Societies*, discusses the conspiracy of power that underlies the current machinery of the Western global-corporate empire.

This controlling central power (let's call it the Beast) is the fundamental ailment we are in sore need of healing from. The movie *The Matrix* is a metaphor of our own heroic struggle for liberty against the Beast, and provides a hopeful message that vigorously stirs the blood of freedom people.

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The time is approximately 200 years from now, planet Earth. Early in the 21st century, humans achieve functional artificial intelligence (AI) which instead of leading to a comfortable human-machine Singularity[1] results in an earth-razing cataclysm. Machines (computers) 1: Humans 0.

The machine uber-intelligence (MUI) that takes over is analogous to our "Beast."

In a licentious twist of any physics I'm familiar with, the MUI needs energy, so it clones, incubates, and grows humans in vast fields of sealed chambers to take advantage of their electrical potential. Humans in name only: their consciousness is channeled via a sophisticated neural network set up by the MUI to resemble Earth of 1999, i.e. the Matrix.

(You might ask why bother providing to these Eveready 'droids such a dream world where they seem to grow, live, love, and die as generations before them. You won, why not just turn their minds off entirely? Well, apparently the pod people don't generate the BTUs if they're bored.)

Not everyone in the Matrix is comfortable with the system. Thomas Anderson, who goes by the hacker name Neo (Keanu Reeves) is one such discontent. The few remaining real humans, led by Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne), believe Neo is "the One" who will ultimately free humanity from the Matrix and defeat the MUI.

They locate Neo, convince him to unplug (take the red pill), then spend weeks with him in training. The rebels hack into the Matrix where Neo visits the Oracle (Gloria Foster). Before they can safely exit, Morpheus is captured by agents—agents are the MUI's fearsome sentient programs that enforce the Matrix.

In the attempt to rescue Morpheus, Neo goes toe-to-toe with Super Agent Smith (Hugo Weaving) in a scene reminiscent of the final showdown in *A Fistful of Dollars*. Only the Wachowskis in addition to massive gunplay send up exciting martial arts sequences and special effects that blow you away.

In case you're the one person who hasn't seen the movie yet, I won't spoil the ending, except to say it's terrific.

To me the movie strikes parallels to our real world and our struggle against the Beast[2]. The Matrix itself is the epitome of our quasi-Orwellian, TV-mind-controlled nation:

Consider our Beast's indoctrination systems (compulsory schools and the criminal justice system) and propaganda ministries (mainstream media and academic elites). Too many people enfold themselves into these pods of conformity. Agents are analogous to our central-system soldiers and cops turned against Constitutional liberty.

"The Matrix is a system, Neo. That system is our enemy. When you're inside, you look around, what do you see? Businessmen, teachers, lawyers, carpenters, the very minds of the people we are trying to save. But until we do, these people are still a part of that system, and that makes them our enemy. You have to understand most of these people are not ready to be unplugged, and many of them are so inured, so hopelessly dependent on the system that they will fight to protect it." — Morpheus

How different is this from America or the world?

Conservatives (not true conservatives) have been groomed to favor a strong central power to make people moral by beating them up and to distribute taxpayer largesse among corporate usurpers. Liberals (not true liberals) insist on a strong central power to push people around for their own good and to posture as helping the unfortunates.

True conservatives and true liberals are libertarians.

Each of these pressure groups believes it has a birthright to the central power. That's why they hate each other so. The option of not having a central power (or having a very small one) has been brainwashed away by, you guessed it, the central power—the Beast.

Logicians call this "the fallacy of the excluded option."

Morpheus, Neo, and their crew represent the excluded option of human liberty. Hence the central power in the Matrix truly has something to fear from them: Humans have properly identified the central power as the enemy.

Similarly, as the pro-liberty/humanity message spreads among people in the real world we will assuredly disintegrate our real Beast.

This review is exceptionally long, but the movie is also exceptional. So I want to close with a couple of great quotes:

In the first, Morpheus has just informed Neo of the nature of the Matrix, and how by virtue of the fact Neo is human—he embodies the Tradition of the Imagination?—he can dictate the outcome of any simulated reality:

"Are you trying to tell me that I can dodge bullets?"

"No, Neo, I'm trying to tell you when you're ready, you won't have to."

Then the ultimate statement by Neo to the MUI, which shares a vision I commented on in Jon Rappoport's book. Namely, by giving up the formula of the secret society and embracing our own creative powers, we can have the world we want:

"I know you're out there. I can feel you now. I know that you're afraid. You're afraid of change.... I'm going to show these people what you don't want them to see. I'm going to show them a world... without you, a world without rules and controls, without borders or boundaries, a world where anything is possible."

Right arm, brother! [1] Please refer to my column on Ray Kurzweil's Fantastic Voyage for the life-extension argument. He has also written on the subject of what he regards as the imminent coalescence of human intelligence and AI into a planetary-wide form of conscious organism: the Singularity.

[2] This groundbreaking creation of the Wachowski brothers, particularly this first movie of their trilogy, has profound allegories for various belief systems and worldviews. For example, here's a Christian interpretation. I prefer the secular-humanist, realist perspective because I find supernatural fantasy unworthy of the Matrix's main metaphors... not to mention the whole point of the movie is to *defy* authority over one's mind.

[3] The French theorist of hyperreality, Jean Baudrillard, died March 6, in Paris. He inspired some of the Wachowski brothers' imagination of these artificial realities. (The illegal-stash-holding book Neo pulls from his shelf early in the movie is Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation*.)