



The Matrix Sequels: “Re-viewed”

Jon Gee

:: The Matrix :: “Re-Visited...”

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a film review of the Matrix sequels

source: <http://www.benpadiah.com/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=489>

written: April 8, 2006.

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: contents :

Reloaded: blow by blow.

(3)

Revolutions: Pointless Gab

(13)

Randy wrote:

(23)

Yeah, so anyway...

(31)

While I am STILL here...

(32)

And while I'm STILL here...

(34)

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee



okay d00ds and d00derettes.

First let me pay homage to M1. Good movie. Good fucking movie.

Nice innovations, such as what Max314 would call "dolphin-time." Not since Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves, with "arrow POV" had I seen such a nice idea pulled off so believably. But why stop there? Why not combine the use of multiple camers with a POV shot? Why remain objectivist? And this, my friends, constitutes my majour problem with the Wachowski's REAL mentality behind their "destory hollywood" facade. They don't WANT to "go further." They are like Smith. Discuss.

Oh, and while I'm here, don't get me started on Ken Wilbur!!

-ben

Reloaded: blow by blow.

"A strategy is still being formulated." This is, as I believe Colonel West also recognises, the last good line in the film. After that, you have the IMPLICATION of Smith, the whole "he set me fwee, wawawa!" bullshit. Neo fights agents, all is well. Neo flies, kinda stupid. Then Smith. Two Smiths. Now...

Everyone was surprised by this the first time they saw the movies. And it made people uncomfortable. How were we supposed to feel about this? Two Smiths? Is that okay? It seems kinda corny. All this nervous energy in the theatre, building a tense moment up to... the big release... Link: "He's doin his superman thing." BULLSHIT. AAARRRGGGHHHHHH!!!!11

The first shots of zion are fairly unimpressive. Aliens gunsuits, Metropolis gears. Stupidly flourescent lighting. Good VR FX. Better than the Matrix code even, but maybe too THX.

Immediately after overly pompous fanfare for a hovercraft landing, which I'm sure is quite stirring and all, we cut into the stupider than shit "intentionally" minimalist, soap-opera dialogogue that defines zion. Locke, Morpheus, Niobe. The Kid. Link, Zee, Dozer, Tank. Hamman, even motherfucking Neo and Trinity! It is sooo blah. A space

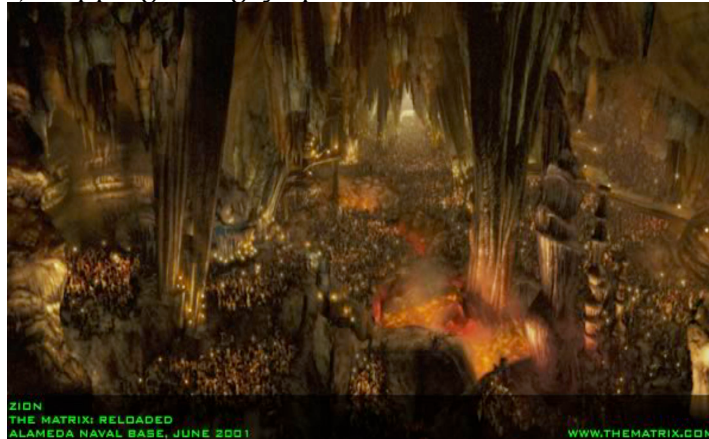
The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

opera without it being in outer space is JUST another soapy cereal.

BLAH BLAH BLAH. Excuse me but I have to skip ahead. See, I have the power to do that now that I own a dvd player. I am "enlightened." I am "bourgoise." LMAO! BULLSHIT.....!

Skipping ahead to the Temple scene. Blah Blah Hamman's words are hollow, no delivery. Compared to Morpheus, which is the whole point. "ZION HEAR ME!" (Vader: "NOOOOO!" LMAO!!!) skipping that gay speech with his shirt off nonsense.



Now, yes, here. the rave scene. I like this, but shit, do you know what I was thinking about the first time I saw it? I was thinking about how much fun it would be to have on while toking a bong. And the second time I watched it I was thinking about how precession could be best be explained to someone who still felt deep down the earth was flat. Needless to say this scene bores stoners and scientists alike. NEXT.

Oh and BTW, I think Neo may be gay. Anyone else wonder that at the end of the love scene? Yeah, I know, me too.

the stillness of a seemingly uiversally peaceful night in the future heavens underground shattered by the sound of breaking glass and a thud. Then a sudden glimpse of Smith, like an intercut shot of a big fat cock in a children's movie. And then fifteen motherfucking WASTED minutes listening to Hamman and Neo suck dick back and forth about how there is no point.

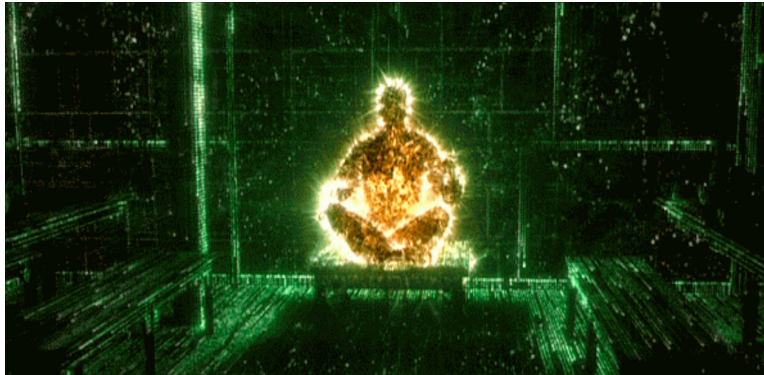
I'd have prefered a more straight-forward depiction of the four-elemental watchtowers at the center of the greater spherical ethers rather than the question of "Hulk smash bad machine."

Oh and while I've got twenty minutes while Link licks Zee's nipples, would somebody PLEASE, FINALLY, EXPLAIN TO ME how the whole "drop box" system of passing information through the Matrix works? Why do they have a disk inside the program that handily pops out of the computer and lets them load a location when they broadcast from the ship? WHA? It's called a fucking phonecall! Works for Seraph in Rev.

AHHHH CHRIST! The spoon was long enough, now Hamman and Locke are barebacking each other. Enough, onto the next scene.

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee



oooo pretty. Green. Most auspicious. LMAO! Never thought I'd want to feel happy to see the inside of the supposedly all-evil Matrix again. Well, I guess "real" life is supposed to look sinisterly disappointing in order to underline the "blue pill" and "Cypher" character agendas... which reminds me. Why not use the Blue Pills en masse like they'd used the character of Cypher in M1? Better than a bunch of stupid Smiths. IMO.

awww. Look at the girl fight. Pansies.

OOO!!! OOOHH!1 HAY!1 HAEYEEY!!! Fox, here come's your firewall thing! "Backdoors" Get it? Did he say Tumblers? Well that's not intentionally obfuscating. Ask a simple question, get a bullshit reply. Man Seraph is such a fucking prop. Such a useless tool.

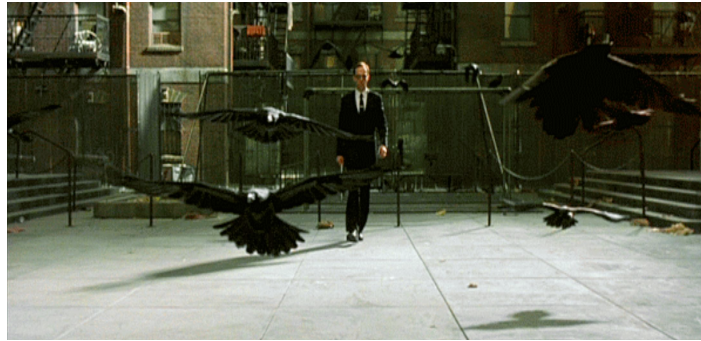


And here's her highness, little miss "I'm too good to live all the way through the filming process for two movies evn though they were shot at the exact fucking same time!" Fuck You, Aunt Jemimah. I doubt you're human too, but wait.. I forgot this movie was bound to comp-geek "tech" talk. Shit, well. One day they won't have to stoop down to the stupid student class and then we can just talk about the metaforms of psychosis as the motive forces while we are merely stationary points of reference they pass through. Fuck man; you guys know Fred Sanford? Look up Red Fox on wikipedia. Funny ass shit. Very existential, very Baudrillard. Not like this. Not like this.

So yes, as I type the conversation goes on. I suppose the philosophers were saying "ooo, it's deeper than you think, oh mighty neo-wannabes," but what the Wbros seem to me to really be saying is "you ass holes like the taste of bullshit?" Evidence: the Oracle feeds it to Neo and calls it candy. Come on, like there's not "programming codes" hidden in her candy. Christ, I can learn more from one hit of "candy" than a whole slew of contrived pseudo-intelligable bullshit about "seeing past choices we don't understand." Someone PLEASE tell me what that means!

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee



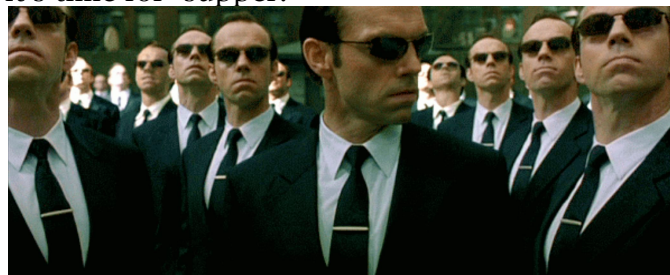
Fuck man. Finally.. the potential for coolness implied by the mention of the name "Merovingian," is really epic, IMO. Seek the GRAIL! SEEK THE GRAIL! But then... Smith. The ultra-antithesis of cool. The virtual anti-epic trying to cash in on Hugo's "fame" (read: Nerd-fame) from LOTR. And then Smith just talks. And he says nothing he hasn't ever said before, and he says nothing new other than what the Oracle just said. And it takes fifteen minutes, while he very obviously "creeps up" on Neo.

Oh and BTW, Dora the Explorer called, and she wants her dramatic pause for induced vicarious audience participation back. Fags. And not even the GOOD kind of Fags. Flamers. Not even Flamers. Ninja and business man homos going at it. BURLYMAN STYLE. GGGGAAAAAAAYYYYYYYYY!!!!11!!!!



Then something happens I've never seen before. Even the kung-fu fight starts boring the shit out of me. I find myself fidgeting in my chair and glancing at my watch to see if I can sneak out for a cigarette yet or if I might miss something if it happens to just then get good.

but no, there's no escape. "MORE." That's catchy. Hey, do you want fries with that? MOOORRRREEEE. Yeah,.. uhh... so more fires? Jesus... and there's not even the hint in all this grace and so-called, albeit violent, "beauty," not even the slightest hint of a meaning. Then just to add insult to injury, Smith confirms that fact with his old one-liner. Good old Smith, always rocking in that rocking chair saying "it is inevitable." Just poke him when it's time for supper.



The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

Now not even Neo "knows" anything. Fucking DOLT. m1: "I know Kung Fu." m2: "I don't know what he was doing, but it FELT like DEATH." Right. Blah.

Then this stupid pissing contest between monkey-Locke and the Atlantean council... of... wait... counting the number of members on the council... oh wait, that's right. I remember now. I'm not a super-geek so I don't give a shit. Who among you will run with the hunt?

sorry, but I HAVE to smoke, so I'm pausing this for a minute. I'll brb.



Okay then. Morpheus shakes his head no. And now, someone explain to me how he can see that "every floor is wired with explosives." Why do we not get VFX shots for every time Neo "sees" the code? I could've lived with that shot from the Jap trailer of the green code scrolling up with Neo as he puts his shades on as Smith (ARRGGHH!) walked up in the last scene. But... ah well. Fuckit. In a "perfect" world, right?



Now, on to the Merovingian. Could he be MORE Gay? Please?? Let's REALLY let ourselves go wild here people.

Now, the whole "cause and effect" speech, aside from expressing one of the most fundamentally loathesome traits of human behaviour, that of the "power struggle," goes further in advancing the so-called "supporters" view of how important the different character's points of view are. Hog wash. Leave that to Star Wars. Lucas should have been allowed, utterly undistracted by this green cake tripe, to give us his own explanation of what Kenobi's cryptic "from a certain point of view" comment meant. We don't need these cross-dressing sand-people from Chicago to tell us what GL meant. Stupid Stupid Stupid.

"I must take a piss." Audience laughs. Why? More "nervous" laughter. Now the women: "touch me, and that hand will never touch anything again." "We are still

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

alive," now the blacks laugh. "Follow me," says Persephone. Then the smart-asses laugh. What a collection of purple assed babboons!

"why don't you sample this instead?" Now everybody in a committed relationship laughs and looks nervously at their significant other. Neo and Persephone kiss and I can feel little Mary-Jane Rottencrotch's hand tighten on my thigh. Then I awaken to remember. Nope. Still not queer. Still bored and busy not giving a FUCK what this movie is supposed to be about.

More tough looks on the part of the three main characters as they walk into the "chateau." Stupid clownporn vampire, wannabe Goth bullshit on the screens behind Neo, Persephone's rhetorical ultimatum. More bullshit chuckling. Philosopher's get stiffies for the bookcase doorway. Old hat.



Now the Keymaker. Probably the ONLY character IMO worth a goddamn in the entire sequels, just for coolness factor. Again, though. Compare his elderly zen salesmanship to Merv's blubbering foppish dandy-assed fancy pants schtick. Yeah, again. Overplayed. Make the audience giggle several specific time intervals in a row, then segue scooter on into a fight scene.

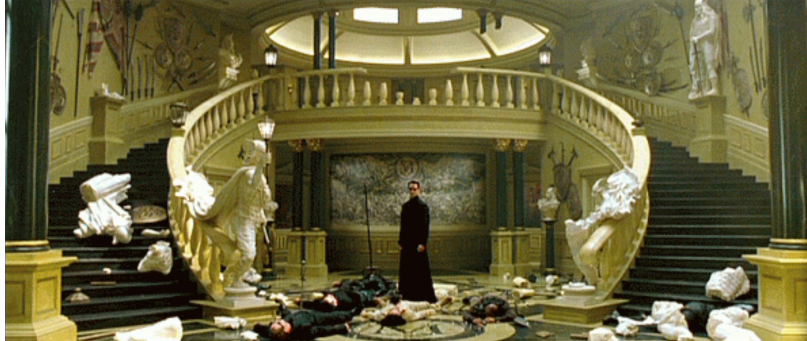


Again, the only IMPORTANT pieces of information ("your predecessors..." for example) is immediately drowned out by an action scene. It doesn't matter, then, if the action scene is good or not (and they ARE), if the whole premise of the action scene is known to be nothing more than a diversion, a distraction, to keep people "guessing," to keep people "on their toes," to keep people "interested" in the premise. A cheap trick that, once exposed, easily reveals the necessity the Brothers felt in

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

having to defend their choices in making the Sequels. As long as we waste time with Neo fighting, we don't get to follow up on Merv's comment. Then he repeats it, after the fight, to taunt Neo, reminding us all we are trapped in an RPG with no dice.



And OH GOODY! Here's the twins. Just Try to TELL me these two are heterosexual. No man, seriously. I can see these guys sucking down a pint of teh monthly vapours and coming up for air. YELCH!

Pointless garage driving fightscene establishes the "rules" for the Twins to "ghost" and use their razor weapon. Etc. Majour boring stuff.

HAHA, Link said "look out behind you." HAHA! Oh, that Link! LMAO. Not.

oooo, the interstate. Suicide??? Now THAT sounds fun. Motherfucking kill these boring ass rodents in their pointless ass little hamster-maze. Black gay flirting temporarily aside.

and Niobe can't just call Morpheus and be all like, "Hey, y'all, whassup, y'all, where the party my dizzzle?" Whatever. Oh and BTW, randy, the WBros seem capable of UNDERSTANDING the rules governing their own fantasy world only about as long or as much as seems necessary for them to DENY this understanding, break the rules, piss on the laws, etc. Even though they made them up. Hulk Smash Bad Machine! Pee Pee = Bad Snake! Naughty! (Fuckers)

the free way chase also has some "stirring music," but in about ten years this whole sequence is going to look like the old Ketystone Cops comedy silent films with some George Gershwin music playing behind it. Again, the WBros stretch the limits of the filmic medium, but do nothing so shockingly new in the sequels as was "bullet-time" in M1. Nothing "revolutionary" to see here, please move along.

Ahhh. Here comes the scene why I LOVE the KeyMaker. You get to ride on the ass end of a fast bike with a hot chick in skin-tight spandex. FUCK. YES.

as for Morpheus blowing "up" the twins? Are they, like, dead... I mean, cause they, like, might have already BEEN dead, like, that's why they're ghosts, but, yeah, like... did they die again... because apparently napalm burns ectoplasm.

Oh wait, something's changed. The KeyMaker's getting a stiffy. I can FEEL it..... (Cryptic huh?)

alright alright alright alright christ. enough.

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

here comes Morpheus, hey AUDIENCE? It's been ten seconds, do you remember Morpheus?



Oh and BTW... the swords people. Bad continuity on the height from the roof of the truck of the sword. Obvious though.

1 Adam 12. Only good line so far.

So, yes, Morpheus looks upgraded too. Buffer, or, how do you say, portlier? No, more obese? More fat? I mean, oh nevermind. OOO monkey do handstands. This fight gets more and more frustratingly pedestrian every fucking time I watch this movie. It's like I'm watching a ballet. You know exactly what I mean.

Combined momentum and inertia.

Enter Niobe.

"You are no longer necessary...."

"I have a stiffy."

"You were meant for deletion."

"stick your dick in his ass."

and, I'm sorry, but as good as this whole bullshit yin-yang semitruck collision with a simultaneous entirely digital snapzoom forwards and truck backwards psycho shot ending with neo spiralling up with Morpheus and Keys IS.... I would rather have another smoke. So, while the "machines bore toward zion" (OOPS, Forgot that was supposed to be the plot) and neo has exploding building flash-forwards starting an unusual montage for the series, the whole "three ships=providence" bullshit, I'm heading outside for another quick smoke. Pause at 314 seconds.

Alien romance. Completely off the level of what we are accustomed to identify with. Traditional princess-bride true love is preferable to me on all levels. "Gat paid.. yadda yadda" stupid doughnut dunking cop fucks.

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

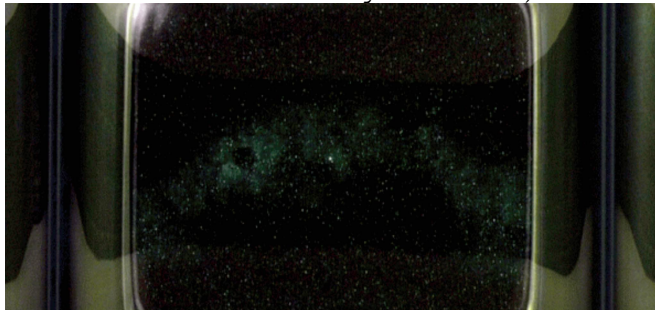
Jon Gee

Morpheus' speech about there being no accidents would have played better if more of it had been released on the Animatrix soundtrack that summer, and if it hadn't been so juxtaposed and disproven by reality in the film. Irony is a bitch, yes. Make "Irony" a character, like Cypher, then. Don't treat Irony as a universal law outside of the Matrix, amorphous like time itself. That is simply a cop out, a short cut to providing a "poetic" answer instead of a plausible one. The screw breaks in reality because "there ARE accidents." OKAY! We Get It! No need to make it a major pivot point for the plot or anything. Just fucking mention it is all. Like the déjà vu in M1.

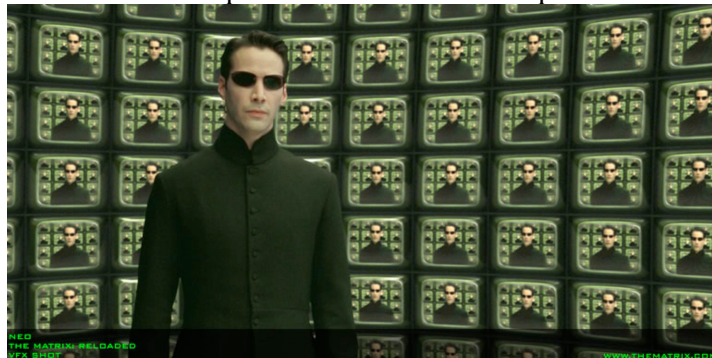
(NUKE ALL POWER PLANTS! YEAH! DUHHH! DROOL CROMAGNONS!)

Yes, Trinity. Grow wings. Let your butt cheeks unfold and flocks of angels sigh you gently to your perfect swan lake landing. Priss. "Still using all the muscles except the one that really matters." Meaningless line because it was never explained. As usual, followed up with "There's so many me" (boring conversation anyway...), and then cue violins it's action sequence time.

OOO. Suspenseful beeps and time dilation don't explain why all this time that Trin is in, while Neo is with the Architect (presumably, even, let's pretend OUTSIDE of all time altoughter), where the FUCK is Morpheus? Is he off jacking off in the bedroom while all the rest of his friends play poker? ("Man, he's on the down-low. This ain't no poker game." - Ice Tea from Law 'n' Order by Dick Wolf)



okay so, my take on the architect's room is that Neo is the singularity at the center of a galaxy. This galaxy is the room. It is surrounded by other such singularities, within other such galaxies, depicted on the tv screens. The imbalanced equation ought to be painfully obvious. Instead Neo gets smart and, instead of letting the Architect talk (for the first time he has all the time in the world as far as he knows), Neo acts like he wants to kick his ass. What a dupe. What a rube. The "problem" is choice. DING.

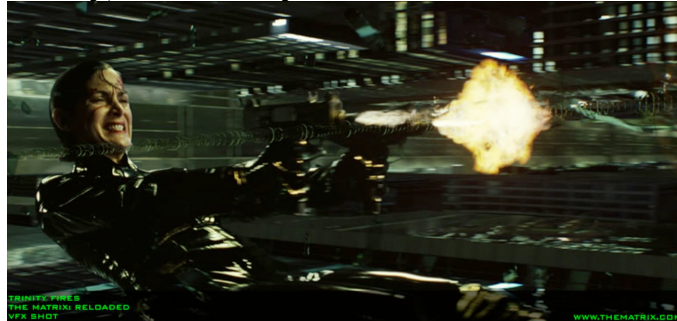


Anyone think this will play as campy as the old sixties Batman tv show in about another five years or less? I do.

The Matrix Sequels: “Re-viewed”

Jon Gee

Anyway, back to colonel Sanders. Nice pictures. I guess the screens in this room, the kibuki window shadow fight in Rev, and all the green-code VFX shots are supposed to all tie together in some way, but honestly? I don't care.

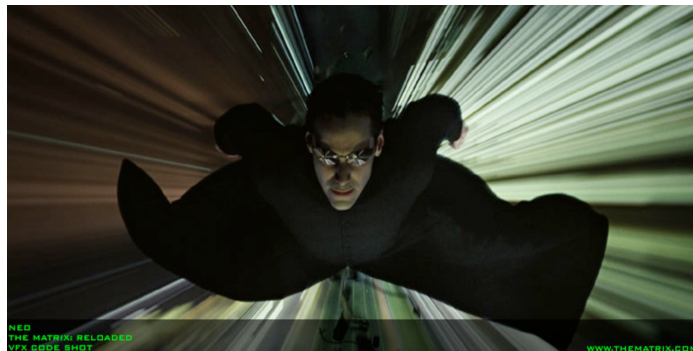


So yeah, back to Trin. OOPS. Sorry. Not quite yet. The Colonel is still blathering on about chromosome numbers or some plot forwarding information that he, apparently, as God, feels it necessary to confess to Neo, as a fucking mosquito, in the same vein as Dr. No conveniently "spilling the beans" to double oh seven. But I guess the world hasn't had enough of silly love songs.

Ok, just a quicky: Love=insanity; love=beginning and end, therefore, insanity = beginning and end. This bit of "logical" mathematical equations brought to you by the Matrix movies, supposedly about VR and AI, but really just a soap opera about different points of view.

Oh and BTW, it's been ten seconds, where's Morpheus?

No, seriously. I'm glad to know that Neo's premonition about the building Merv's restaurant was in being completely wired with explosives turns out to be the same building the floor with no stairs and the door made of light are in. Betcha didn't notice that the first time! Oh no, wait. It's impossible to miss. It's just Not EXPLAINED. That's it. Whatever.



Oh and btw I just talked through the Trinity pseudo-death scene. Green code VFX shot is expected to explain in and of itself how Neo can permeate Trin's "solid" RSI inside the Matrix. BULLLLLLLLL SHHHHHHHHHHHHITTTT.

"It doesn't matter who. I believed him." Right, because Neo is led around blindly by belief. Like the fool of the tarot pack. Morpheus is the magician and Trinity is the Papis or Pope Joan card. Osiris, Thoth and Isis. Duh... Oh wait, I'm sorry. None of that counts for shit either, because the stupid audience is too dumb to understand those

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

implied dual roles of the characters as archetypes. So instead, we get the death of the Neb and Morpheus oblique references to Jacob in the bible.

BTW, is it just me, or does everyone find these stupid "real world" excursions at the end of M1 and now also M2, like the pre-titles opening to a Bond movie, to be stupid? I mean really... If you're gonna make a fucking sequel, then just tack "to be concluded" right after the green code VFX shot of Neo saving Trin. Everything else from that, christ toss it into a cartoon like with Flight of the Osiris. The crew members of the Hammer look like fucking cartoons anyway. Buncha buff salad tossers.

And then the dramatic ass music to accentuate the split-second, upside down reiteration of a fucking bit-character who we are supposed to be all like "oh, now I gotta watch the whole movie over again to figure out who that was and give the Wachowski's all my money!" Then immediately, again with no explanation, minimal implied meaning even, and for no good reason, we drop into Rage Against the Machine.

At this point, when I saw this movie 12AM midnight opening, I skulked out of the theatre. What a terrible travesty! I felt like I just found out my dad was cheating on my mom with my daughter or some such shit. Very upset.

Some would say this was foolish. So when I went back for the closing show on opening day, I stayed. And saw. The Preview.... And..... Was..... Still.... Disappointed. Yes. Still disappointed and bored. Very boring. Yes.

I'll go on and do Revs as well, but gimme a couple more hours, m'kay?

-ben

Revolutions: Pointless Gab

Back to this bullshit. Exploding big bang of gold code, swirls out into fractal fibonnaci spirals, then zooms back into a a single green code letter, then dipping down the same building Trin fell out of, and the same corner where Neo calls from at the end of M1, and of the soon to be (in)famous crater scene at the end of Revs. Pan back to the scrolling raining sea of green. If you look closely, in the opening shot of M1, you can see the green code scrolling down BEHIND the black background, even of the trace program. It's interesting to think of all that as having been inspired by some doofus staring at their MS DOS screen waaayyyy back in the butt fucking eighties.

Oh wait, suddenly action. No one noticed that incoming call except Link. StOOOpid. Sati is the ped sex goddess, yes? Giving her a halo of innocence doesn't make her natural inquisitiveness and seemingly already elderly and wizened soul peeking through around the corners of her smiling eyes any less perverse, in its own way. The twisting of the practicality of the Oriental, even the most Westernised sub-continent and islands of the Orient, being wrapped up with the feminisation of the lands to be conquered.

Of course, there was discussion at the time about electron orbital shell levels and the Oracle, but to my knowledge this discussion never panned out. Tin dialogue to my

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

ears, though, personally.

Ahhh, back to Sati. You KNOW Neo's got a sick old Westerner hard-on to tap that underaged Hindoo jailbait. The powerplant systems manager for recycling software programmes? I never quite catch that. Basically Rama Khandra himself is the ass-valve of the turd-factory. You could say he puts a kind face on the design and development of the programmes within the Matrix to juxtapose the stiff-necked evil southern gentleman of the Arch, father of the Matrix, even more beneficent than the Oracle, bitch-mother of the Smith-bastard, IMO.

Anyway, here's the trainman. Most retarded, comic-book-like character in the whole trilogy. Worst. Character. Ever. (except Towely)

so anyway, it turns out back in soap-opera baliwood, Rhama Khandra continues giving me flashbacks to Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom and Ghandi in alternating order. Then the trainman shows up and, apparently, has what the Japanese media would describe as a "most auspicious virility" or, as would translate from that back into English, "big penis" syndrome. He punches Neo hard for no real reason, just apparently to demonstrate to the audience (who knows? they may not know this from M1 or Rel.) that in the Matrix-world the concept of "strength" is relative.

Neo runs around a while stupidly while the techno-n00bs get wet thinking of old videogames. Then there is a pointless fightscene where the rule of taking turns is firmly established. Then there is a much MORE pointless gunfight in which the rule of taking turns results in the camera actually staying on each character for a dilated period of time. Not bad choreography, and not bad cinematography. But these themselves do not herein combine to make the scene "not bad" enough to forget how stupidly pointless it was, and, to remember even, how stupidly pointless the whole Matrix trilogy has become.

The gun octopus scene is cute the first hundred times you see it, until that nob-gobbler Merv starts skwawking. Merv sucks that olive like Merv Griffin sucked a nut. And then Merv establishes the whole "eyes of the oracle" motif to play out later with Smith, "only taken, never given." then the Oracle programme rewrites something over when she copies onto Smith, which is the whole stupid "everything that has a beginning has an end, neo" crater scene where Smith and Neo butt-hump and make up.

"I don't have time for this shit" sums up my whole opinion of the sequels.

mexican standoff times ten. Tense violin sustained vibrato. Then Perspehone, a character so unnecessary she has the same number of lines in both sequels as the Twins, re-establishes the purpose of or meaning for the entire "kiss me, Neo, pinch my titty" scene in Rel. Then Neo and Trin kiss to a crescendo of strings which, I have to admit, had no emotional effect on me at all.

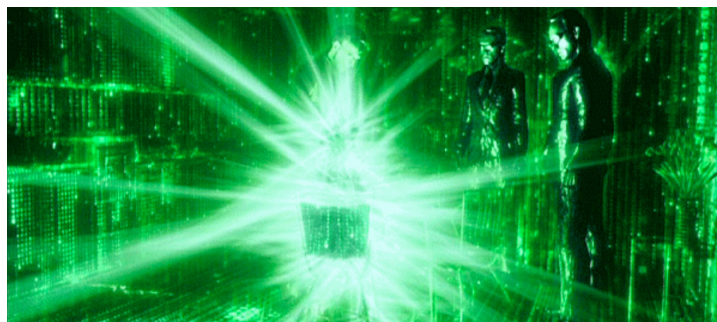
OOOO! Make those fuckin cookies Sati! Knead that dough, really dig into it. Pretend you're making sandals for your deaf and dumb little thalidomide sister, and medicine for your napalm and agent orange gassed father with one foot only who wades through the person-sized sewer pipes in the lowest caste. Yeah.

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

Neo and Oracle, in the LAST (even according to Neo himself) chance for the philosophy aspect of the movie, the "talky" parts, to redeem itself to the expectations of the audience. The Oracle explains the Architect again as "not seeing past choices he can't understand." Still no explanation of what this combination of words is supposed to fucking convey in terms of meaning. BTW, a shot of those power cables intercut after Oracle says "You know where," right before she says, "I see the darkness" would have been a tad helpful. But instead they chose to have Neo see that in MOBIL Ave. I don't know why... maybe to fill dead time... but then... why make the movies at all then? LOL!

Neo needs time and Roland wants answers. Bane's insane game outwits the dim-dumb Captain easily ... OH! I've gotten ahead of myself. We're back to the sappy penut-butter and honey music of Sati and Oracle, bitches in the kitchen! Hail to the Chef! Etc. Then Sati "sees through the wall" and we watch, from her POV (of course!) Smith walking up towards the door of the room they hide in. "He's following us." (I see dead people.) No seriously, isn't she too young to have a uni-brow? I bet she has butt hair too. Smith knows. He can smell that spicy poontang. He's all like, "I'm not so bad, once you get to know me." LMAO! Fuck am I perverted.



Smith talking to Oracle, "why, why, why" just asking the question the audience is asking: "why did I shell out eight bucks for this shit? I just wanted a pre-agreed upon language with which to relate to my sixteen year old gay stepson who is in the trench coat mafia and "loved" M1. But whatever.

Now here is Bane's "insane" act. He's Smith. People. I want to scream at the screen. But then I retract and realise, the Wachowskis are telling this film to me. I have no part in it. I, the fan, represent nothing more to them than the passive consumer represents to the megalo-conglomerate multinational coporation. The Wachowskis want to tell their story using simple minded idiots representing the "FREE MINDS" and the denizens of "the LAST FREE CITY," then fine. It's on MY fucking DIME, but fine. Waste my fucking time.

Oh what? Wait, what? Oh, I'm sorry, you already are. "Put that shit away boys all she needs is a jump." "Niobe," "Morpheus." "You wanna fuck?" "Helllzzzz Yeeeeeaaahhhhh."

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee



Back to Locke and the machines are STILL nowhere NEAR breaching zion. I feel like the entire amount of time in between watching Final Flight of the Osiris and this scene has all been a total waste of time. Again people telling Locke "it's best not left up to you," infantilising him and feeding his need for a more aggressive ego, a more assertive policy. Viscious cycle anyway.

Zee makes shells in a truly heart-warming Hallmark, International Taster's Choice Coffee moment. And then the Kid spills alot of bombs. Instead of reeming him out Mephone lets the Kid browbeat him, then gets all cozy with him and pats him on the ass with a sentinel tendril vibrator. Gay.

"Clean the windshield" was bad even to the audience I first saw this movie with. More low-tones, slow moments. These are "important" for some reason. Perhaps I just don't "GET" the whole pacing of this movie, the choice to start in the Real World instead of in the Matrix, and to have that shitty soap-opera bullshit world take up so much time right at the crucial beginning part, that usually features Trinity... just shit. Then more homoerotic speeches by Roland and a very pro-feminist retort by the empowered black woman. Whatever. Too obvious for me, may as well just throw scalding hot coffee in my face.

Bane kills whatshername here, which I think I may have fallen asleep during in the theatre. I'd stayed up for twenty four hours listening to the soundtrack between the time it was released the day before the movie and the midnight showing the following night, the premiere of Revs in town. I could only barely wake up when Trin said "Everything for you..." a little louder right before the gag line "you know what's changed in the last 24 hours? Nothing."

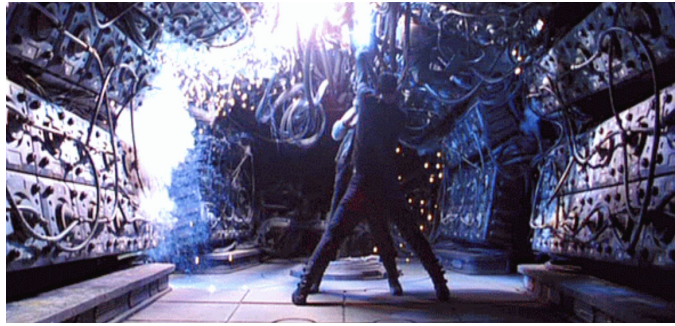
Anyway, brb, smoke.

Yes, okay, where were we? Oh yes, Morpheus and Neo have the "honour" homo-hug, and then the nifty "flashback" quote about already being late.

Then He sends his bitch, and it's all down hill from there. Bane, interestingly enough, didn't simply get the electro-zappa shotgun-with-a-window-screen from the wall instead of holing himself up like a viper with the fuses in the lower hull. No, he hid, and then Neo "brought" him the gun.

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee



Now look, I'm not even gonna start with this scene. Bane's "mr. Anderson" schtick is almost as drippy with burly man-cooze as Merv's speech about causality in Rel. It's ridiculous. Everyone knows this. This is one of the primary scenes I think the Wachowskis owe ME an apology for, for once. Oh and BTW, Neo JUST said, "it's impossible." He fucking JUST got the whole Bane-Smith thing. Now we know why they cast Keanu. BLECH anyway.

fisticuffs in the real ain't like fightin Tae Kwon Fu in the Matrix is it Samael?



And where is Trinity this time? She can't pop back up just to say hey!? Oh, wait, I guess it's not her "turn." Oh I see. Bullshit. Flaming Smith. Another in-joke perhaps? In any event why didn't the Oracle, who by this point HAS been absorbed into the Smith collective, simply broadcast her RSI from the Source into Bane's body? Why doesn't the movie just end there? But no... we have to see where this Karma QBLH's out to.

Just like Neo has to hang off the ledge of a downtown building in the Matrix to be prepared enough karmically to see the towers of the human-power plant in the real world, so too here does he have to fight Bane (and essentially lose) in the real world in order to have the right or enough karma to confront Smith in the Matrix (and essentially lose).

Oh wait, I'm sorry, I can't hear myself THINK over Mephone's bullshit speech. This whole movie is just a series of monologues. Even when there's two people involved, the back-and-forth is only what is necessary information for the two Matrix Warriors to share. Its like being of one mind, and thus essentially monologues and then...

"Jigs up, here they come..." (flashback to "here... they... come" at the end of M1) cue the stirring violins, and buckle your cockbelts, it's time for, that's right, you guessed it, ANOTHER action sequence. Roland's continual hyper-masculine shit-eating at the hands of the better at one-ups-MANship of Niobe just makes for instant comedy, fun

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

for the whole family.

OOO! Breach, the dock is breached! Buckle Up. Present. Sorry, but at this point I'll exercise my option as a bourgoise home-theatre owner and turn the fucker DOWN. You gotta love it loud, right? RIGHT? No, I mean... LOL... can you repeat your answer because I couldn't hear you. Hey, and as uber-contrasty between the lesser, but brighter lights and the greater, darker shadows is, ROTS is better.

ARGH. RELOAD. I'm Milli Vanilli. I need more ammo! Yeah, Kid, trust me, It Does Get Worse. There's still that annoying big blue bug zapper at the tip of the tower. OOO, look at that swarm! Left, then right, then sweeping around and over the tower, but still that obnoxious buglight. Well, anyway, as long as we're wasting time, we may as well check out Zee and her hot lesbian friend in the infantry continually fuck up their attempts to stop the enourmous butt-plug drilldo in ways that can only be considered comical if one considers disappointment to be funny. Which I do.

"Shit she's got a fat ass" can also be taken as commentary on the difference between Sporty Niobe type Afro-American women and the "junk in the trunk" type of Afro-American women. Again, I like to take the road less traveled, and so I likes me some junk in the trunk. Eh?

Christ, here we go again. Load those turds into the ass-lighter bazooka, Zee. Hold my belt, Zee. Coddle me while I lag behind and then get killed by the sentinels, Zee. Christ, the plantation mentality never ends!

...Not even worth it...

full power... 90°... that's a sharp turn.

I wonder what Ken Wilbur has to say about "gold" colour of the flames consuming zion. Or what that son of a bitch has to say about the choice of the word "zion" for the name of "the last free city." But apparently it's I who digress.



Mephone going apeshit. The Kid comes to reload. I guess this whole thing is a pun on the name of the second movie, or something, I dunno. All this brightly lit, sharply contrasted, darkly overshadowed gratuitous violence just makes me want to eat fried chicken and collect unemployment. If only they would make a video game of THIS! ten zillion "the Kid's exclaim, aspiring to be Neo and one with the Matrix (I believe...) but alas the graphix skins are still not capable of being detailed enough to accurately depict even only this small amount of lighting on such various and different complex surfaces. What a sell out piece of shit excuse for an Apocalypse.

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

Mephone you seem to have a skin flap hanging off your face, here... lemme just pull on that and see if I can't just peel that right off for ya.

Blah Blah Blah...

Mephone... I know you can't hear me because you are dead, but... this is Locke. I missed my period this month and... long story short... we're having twins.

Zee rescues the Kid from shit he got his own self into, and then, cue the stirring plantation music as the Architect jizzes up the Oracle's ass somewhere in the back of Smith's all-powerful-by-now mind, as the kid finally jets his first jizz, officially barmitzvahing himself, with the phrase, "Neo... Mazeltov," or some such SHIT. Then the big crash, a series of cute moments between Morpheus and Niobe, and then between Zee and Link, and then a stiff-assed moment between Niobe, Morpheus and Locke.

I think the concept "conflict forwards the plot," should NOT be taught at the basic college level for writing composition. The reasons for this should be obvious why by now.

Then, in an absolutely brilliant tactical move on the part of the humans, they blow up the elevators between the docking platform and the lower living levels, because hey... they're sentinels. They ain't walkin down no damn stairs!

Then Morpheus and the "It Takes A Village" People which is, unfortunately, so quiet after all the noise pollution of the last scene that I can't make out a fucking word. I'm sure it's not important anyway. Hey, Trin? You like driving? Hey Neo? That puss coming out of your eye sockets working out for you there, buddy? I bet you never saw THIS coming did ya? And while I think about it, wasn't it really Cypher who introduced the whole multiple-points of view aspect of the storyline in the Matrix trilogy in the first place? Anyway...

Doesn't that one zion defense ops tech look alot like Hugo, btw? More quiet dialogue between Locke, Morpheus and the Council. Couldn't they have just done all these short council meetings in one scene? It's really pointless to draw this all out anyway... but well.... whatever.



Neo and Trinity near machine city. Some enourmous ugly beetle looking bugs start barebacking each other until they shoot missiles and bombs at the dark-side anti-hero couple, until they suddenly, and for all intents and purposes within the context of the plotline, arbitrarily and randomly happen to transcend and perceive nirvana.

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee



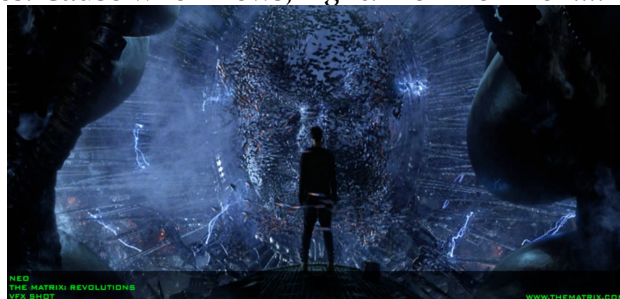
OOPS! you're dead. "Slower..." I can just imagine without looking over at the tv CAM giving Keanu a handjob wearing those latex gloves, while Keanu, wearing only superman underoos, explores his manhood. But oops! I'm supposed to be paying attention to this rivetting death scene! Only guess fucking what? Here's a pop quiz: I don't care about characters in the Matrix sequels. I watch Reloaded. Two hours. I watch Rev. 1:45 so far or thereabouts. You know what's changed in the last three and three quarters hours? Fuck.. I've forgotten what my catchy punchline was supposed to be. Fuck. LINE!

Oops. Trin is dead. Long live the Trin. OOOH! NO! Snap! The bitch yet lives! Sorry, I can't hear a word they're saying and I only look over once in a while. Now they're kissing. You know, speaking of Tarot, the lightning struck tower... Oh wait, I'm sorry, time is against us so we have to cut back to zion for what I'm sure is going to be yet another VERY exciting action scene. But no, just Morpheus at prayer to his man-God. Bah.



Neo crawls "perinatally" (to borrow a term from Grof, whom I've actually studied under personally, thank you) up the butt tunnel and then down between the golden thighs of ... what I can only ASSUME to be... the radio broadcasting tower for WKRP in Machine City.

Lotsa bug like machines. Cause who knows, right? Heh Heh Heh.... <.<.... >.>....



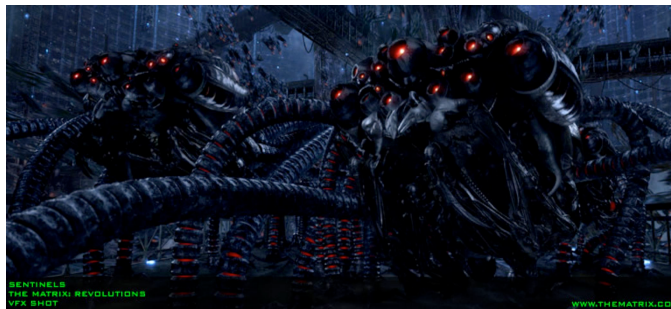
The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

oops, time for Deux to pop up. Coolest lines in the movie here between Neo and Deux. Tough talk. Say it short, say it simple. Deux is the baddest ass baby face since that OG "Baby Face" Nelson. OOO, here it comes, THE Line!



"PEACE."



"what are they doing, what are YOU doing?" More black on black humour.

BTW, Morpheus, what does Neo do? Does Neo... fight for us? Does he fight for us, Morpheus?

Ahhh yes. You think that's freedom that you're breathing, you Messiah building Frankensteinian accomplice, Igor muthafucka. Thoth, my ass.

"Mr. Anderson... welcome back. we missed you."

(time for a smoke, brb)

and now time for an uber burly brawl. It's street fighting style since Neo fought Bane in the real, and the mind has made it real to him, but he AND Smith quickly regain their full capacity (though utterly lacking wit) to use their super secret special ubermensch powers, so they both go medium-sayin and start flyin around, kicking each other through brick walls and into a dojo that appears, although out of place, to be the same room in which Merv's restaurant was. It seems to have a similar interior layout to me, but then, I do not care, because I am not a big nerd.

Heres the kibuke theatre scene that I'm convinced MUST have SOMETHING to do with those tv screens in the Architect's office and all those MYSTERIOUS green code VFX shots. HMMM.

Anyway, here's some glass in your eye. now they "spiral" upwards. Lightning, more

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

street fisticuffs, just up above the city in the air, a really obviously CGI Smith straightens his coat. Here's the "universe bubble" bit. I like that bit, but then, I'm a bit of a psychic showoff myself. I would have made a whole movie just based on exploring the similar physics of our universe, using a model essentially identical to the one presented here as dramatic fiction. BAH.

Crater scene.

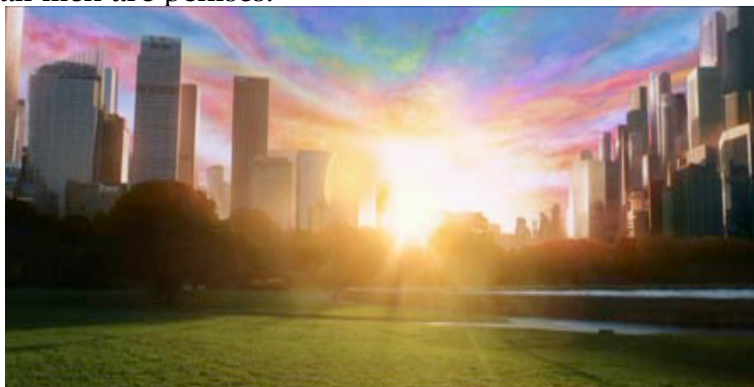
"Why, Mr. Anderson...?" Again, the audience is given voice. Smith as Chorus. We're all so bored and pissed off and wanting our money back for the movie, when Smith starts browbeating the worthless wasted wanked out Neo, we all get that cathartic head rush. It's kosher, because everyone else is doing it too. "I choose to." Dumbest line in fucking cinema history...!

No,, wait, I'm sorry.... It's Smith rising up out of the dirt going "this is MY world, MY WORLD!" right where in M1 Trin says "don't go down that road, girlfriend," to Neo. LMFAO! He looks like Al Jolson. See neither of them can beat the other, and we all know this already, but the characters... CHRIST!... the characters are sooooo fucking STUPID, so Fucking DUMB! They take good ideas, and make them into stupid realities. That's life.

I would have portrayed civilisation personified not as Smith, but as Chthulu, the chthonic God of Sumer. Basically all the same, just the city streets would have turned into mirrors, instead of the individuals possessed by the Smith computer virus, it would have been tentacles, and instead of fighting the one Oracle-Smith clone, Neo could have fought an enormous eye on a pyramid at the center. But NNOOOOO.....!

So yeah, Neodammerung now, the all-important colour-coded "explosion" of Smiths, or as I like to call it, the "Smithsplosion," has already happened, as Thom Yorke from Radiohead sings, "the moments already gone." By now the kid is running through the caves explaining to Hamman, presumably an homage to blind Homer's guide leading him up from the Cave of Plato's character Socrates. But I could be wrong.

Niobe cries on Morpheus chest. You know what that means, Jason. That's right, brotha. You be fappin alone tonight! We just made history! And Neo's carted off in what I can only guess is a sewer barge. Sati awakens to cyber-kitty and the Architect, all Lucifer-like, strolls across the park in the glowing light of "false" dawn. Again, the Oracle has to haggle with Colonel Sanders just like Seraph with Merv, because, the moral is that all men are penises.



The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

Ahh and here comes Sati. You made a sunrise out of cookie dough, didn't you? And look, there's a teletubby's face in it. For Neo? Well, shit, then, keep that up and I guarantee you, if I was Neo, you'd never see my fucking face again. Oh and by the way... Is it just me or is the Oracle's line about "belief" being exploited here for the purpose of tormenting us with further pointlessly vague sequels. Oh no wait, whew. I'm not just now watching this movie for the first time. Whew. Okay, it's 2006, pull it together man. The year is 2006 and MXO has already killed off Morpheus, while PON, supposed to continue on from the end of Revs (where it OUGHT to wrap back around to the end of M1, but frustratingly thus far has been refused to be allowed to do so!!!11!), was also a great big let down.

Oh, cue Navras BTW.

-ben



Randy wrote:

the Wachowskis didn't really care all that much about the human characters. It's the programs they loved.

Right on. I think that's the whole reason they chose to bring back Smith. They needed a problem to occur within the programming software of the Matrix so that we would have an excuse to see the hardware of machine city as dependent on Neo (the One) as a necessary conduit between the two. just as is stated throughout, the humans and machines "need" each other, but this is only accurate within the fictional "Matrix Universe," not in reality: hardware does not depend on people to be able to interact with its own software.

This is one of the big issues of modern AI researcher thinking overlooked by the Wachowskis: machines, the intellectual offspring of humanity, will eventually not be dependent on their parent species to interface between the "interior" software mind and the "exterior" hardware body. "Combined with a form of fusion" is no excuse for the intentional misrepresentation of this key issue at the crux of the trilogy's story-arc. Now, had M1 been a standalone movie, this issue would have been an acceptable casualty, so to speak, but given two further sequels to account for this essential plot-hole and failing to justify it as a premise is inexcusable, from my point of view. If I had been given that much money to make movies, you could goddamn well bet I'd give it my best shot. I would never have come off half-cocked by bringing back Smith to account for the transcendence of Neo from a battery to a circuit-breaker.

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

Even if the Wachowskis had left the issue of the machines depending on the humans for their power-supply an unelaborated upon macguffin, and chosen to follow up in the sequels with the idea of Neo being the "hundredth monkey" to be freed setting off a chain reaction whereby suddenly all the human minds plugged into the Matrix were aware of their choice, and used this excuse to prop up the inevitable visit to Machine City to intervene between the arbitrarily "necessarily" interdependent machines and humans, this would have been a better solution, to my tastes at least, than seeing the Oracle having ostensibly created the Smith-virus in order to blackmail Deux into smuggling in Sati and simultaneously making the Architect look about as smart as the Trainman.

As randy says, keep the importance on Neo, not on this petty cast of background characters. If Neo had, at the end of M1, been talking directly to the sentient mainframe itself, and had this sentient mainframe been successfully depicted as decentralised, location-less, impersonal, a "control system" instead of central, hidden, goofy and as the Architect, then the whole story could have still been told, but without having to add in more program-characters. The sentient mainframe could have manifested itself through a series of pattern-recognition tests, as I have been suggesting here in my earlier posts, or it could simply have been that each time Neo warped the "rules" inside the Matrix, the more it degraded the programming code itself, thus threatening the Machine City central computer.

It wouldn't really matter HOW it was presented, only that it should not have been anthropomorphic. Even Deux' assumption of the "baby" face is a parody on the concept of the "machines needing humans" premise. The machines choosing to continue keeping the human race alive as a power-source is as unforgiveably stupid a premise as the humans "blackening" the sky to block out solar power. It's like thinking an umbrella can stop a rain storm or that if you close your eyes you become invisible. It sounds neat, until you try it, and it doesn't work. In any event, there were countless of other scenarios the Wachowskis could have used to get Neo to Machine City without having brought back Smith. Anyone disagree?

-ben

I think no matter how much emotion can cloud some of all our assessments of the film, on both sides, (which of course is only a testament to the individual importance and cultural significance of M1), there ought to easily enough be some points we can all agree on, certain facts of the movies which even if we interpret differently, like, dislike, etc. we can freely admit these things were there, were traits, qualities etc. of the films, i.e. to confirm with each other that we did indeed see the same movie.

For example:

1) pacing.

Now whether your knee-jerk reaction is to defend or criticise the sequels, you cannot deny that part of your opinion will be based on your reaction to the pacing. Long, fast action sequences of building plot significance coloured M1, but the pacing of the long, slow dialogue and character-building scenes in the sequels were undeniably unique. One minor example, I fell asleep at the start of the Architect scene because I found the hallway fightscenes preceding it to be boringly paced. Others enjoyed this.

The Matrix Sequels: “Re-viewed”

Jon Gee

2) physics.

The rules the Wachowski's introduced as applicable for their different characters were based on their degree or level of perception being able to "bend" or "break" the rules of the Matrix universe. These were the corner-stone, or cap-stone, whatever, of M1, and definately played out in certain key action and dialogue scenes in the sequels. One minor example, I was on the edge of my seat for the vertiginous semi-truck fight scene even more than the vertigonous freeway chase scene in Reloaded, but I didn't care that much for any of the action scenes in Revs.

3) plot-line.

I think we can all also agree that, because while making it the Wachowski's remained uncertain if they could make the sequels, M1 was intended at the time to be able to function as a stand-alone movie. Now, some people simply swing one way on the issue and some the other. Some people think M1 should have remained a stand-alone feature (given the quality of the sequels), while others defend the validity of the sequels as necessary to the artistic vision of the Wachowskis. Ultimately, whether we agree or disagree on this matter, we all have an opinion rrelative to it. (Like God!)

4) personae

I think the characters in M1 paralleled the diagetic gap so closely they actually violated the Proscinium Arch rule of cinematography a couple times. The blend of one persona to the next was a perfect mix. I agree the sequels elaborated on these characters, fleshing them out, drawing in the details, filling in the gaps and tying up loose ends, etc. etc. A whole repetoire of new people were introduced as well, and the audience was sufficiently challenged to draw their own conclusions about how all these characters may have related behind the scenes, in the shadows, off camera, back-stories, etc. etc. etc. Some people believe there was a smooth transition in continuity of quality characters between M1 and Rel. I do not.

That's all the attributes of the Matrix trilogy I can think of that start with P. I think it should be worth noting that there are an infinite other number of traits and features of these multi-layered films as well, and I would encourage you all, for the sake of easement of further communication along these lines, to come up with some example of things you think we can all agree on about the films, basic cinematographic and narrative facts about the style, the genre (if applicable) etc. These will serve as a starting block upon which all sides can come to draft future resolutions. Once we establish a common dialogue, we may begin to be able to see a bit better from the other person's perspective.

I believe it is far too easy to be carried away by our baser emotions when discussing such explosive issues as personal aesthetics. For example, calling my suggestions pedestrian beside the Wachowski's is irrelevant when the real purpose of my making them was as examples of how easy it is for an individual to come up with alternative ideas to handling the style and medium of an (or another) artist. These were never meant to be understood as merely "good" or "bad" ideas, just meant, I'd hoped, to make you think. Sometimes artists, even naturally talented ones, do fail.

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

I think, in a world where part of our reality is mediated for us through forms of artistic expression we ourselves did not create, part of our world is being defined for us by others, etc. it is natural to look for common likes and dislikes to approach and to avoid people who do not share these, and equally important, I think, to learn from these some different types of ways then we ourselves can manifest our own destinies, project our own future world-line, etc.

That is mostly the reason I feel M1 succeeded whereas the sequels failed. And if you can explain to me, in those terms, why I am wrong in my opinion, please feel free to attempt to do so. I cannot myself, and believe me, I've tried.

Reporting from the flat surface of my senses, yours truly,

-benpadiah

It seems to me that if the sequels did anything, it was, as max points out, but what I would call unnecessarily, to elaborate on the implied themes of M1. Now, the Wachowskis chose certain implied themes to follow at the expense of others. Although most of what interested me most about M1 was the ancient origins of certain themes, the Wachowskis chose to follow the philosophical themes chronologically in the sequels, and thus that is all we can really talk about, no matter how limiting this context. By way of example, if I were to talk about Egyptian mythology in M1, then in Second Renaissance, basically an allegory on Atlantis or Eden (themselves only necessary allusions), we would expect to see some seeds from which later direct references to Egyptian mythology, such as the Final Flight of the Osiris, would germinate. Instead, like with the more "official" versions of human history taught in schools, there are necessary gaps or "breaks" in the records.

The Wachowskis chose the "one-way" chronological approach to the presentation of not only the philosophical themes but also, again as max has pointed out, how these themes are "fleshed out" through the actions of the characters. Therefore, we see all the characters lack the omniscience if they were able to view the themes represented by the actions as not just cyclical, that is recognisably repetitive, but as actually themselves transcendent of the repetitive temporal cycle.

Of course, this is obviously not because the Wachowskis lack understanding of these simple facts. Even the most "primitive" bacteria is capable of experiential awareness of the full temporal implications of thematic or repetitive actions. It is my personal belief the Wachowskis simply chose not to allow any of their characters full omniscience because they believe something that I do not: that only by the various-points-of-view method, the so-called Kuleshov Effect used so poignantly in the editing of Citizen Kane, can a reasonable replica, a simulacra, of the "human condition" be achieved... at least through an artistic medium.

Of course, one is immediately reminded of something Socrates, himself a fictional character, once remarked about art as being something like "thrice removed from the kingdom," by which I think he must have meant something about the symbolic representationalism, the inescapable expressionistic connotations, of the Athenian statuary of the so-called "Golden Age." I think Baudrillard shares this disdain for the "third-party" mediation of reality, and refuses, even moreso, to apologise for it than had Hegel.

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

Eventually mediated formats of symbolic communication will have to break down altogether. There is simply more information, and less time, than can sustain tensile pressure on either side of this cut-off valve we quaintly consider "art." However, for now, we can see the choice the Wachowskis made to express their philosophical themes through the actions of their characters as a necessary, and ALLAH BE PRAISED! temporary, evil.

As the Wachowskis characters each say separately, in so many different words, "this world is a chrysalis." In order to depict change, that is, within the Manichean dichotomy of as above, so below, as being preferable for the perpetuation of survival, the Wachowskis chose to limit their characters' understanding, and then to show how it changed over time. For example, Neo's quest for enlightenment, Morpheus' redeemed dogmatism, etc.

As always on the Hero's Quest, the antagonists opposite the protagonists are depicted in estranged and alienated forms, which gradually give way to more beautifully mutated explanations for the same initial themes. For example, Merv's fixation on "cause and effect" is the western parallel to the eastern Rhama Khandra saying "karma is a word." We are then expected to see the changes to the antagonists along the way as beneficially influencing the Hero's Quest to change and thus survive.

Usually, the antagonists are depicted as travelling temporally opposite the protagonist. They are merely retrogressive along the same cycle of events progressed upon by the Hero. "To put it country simple," as Burroughs might say, they are travelling in opposite directions along the same road.

However what this means in narrative dialogue is that the antagonist usually knows more about where the Hero is going than the Hero knows about where the antagonist is coming from. Any reversal of this implies omniscience on the part of the Hero, and tends itself toward the Messiah myth. By giving Neo limited foresight, and by repeatedly presenting the flaws of one antagonist being pointed out to the Hero by other antagonists, the Wachowskis build up their Hero character along his quest. As each opposite villain is met and bested, the power of the Hero grows; this is standard operating procedure. However, when the villains pretend superhumanity and yet are dispatched all too easily, this process inflates exponentially into the Messiah myth.

The alternative to the "forward" moving Hero arbitrarily negating all the misunderstood, "evil" retrogressive antagonists would have approached the same (cyclical) philosophical themes as resulting from chronologically opposed frictions alone. Now, had the Wachowskis chosen to give the audience the benefit of the doubt of omniscience, they could have chosen to portray the sequels quite differently. However, instead, they opted to dumb down the plotline as much as possible without losing the philosophical themes altogether, and thus portrayed the Hero as strong, the villains as weak, and none of them as omniscient.

For example, examining the Matrix as a kind of time machine linking the distant future to our own present, perhaps the theme of the sequels could have been one of presenting some catastrophe of modern times through the seeming prescience of a more omniscient character from the future. However, instead, they chose to portray the threat alledgedly implied by existential Otherness as the ultimate and final

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

conflict before the inevitable dawning of transcendence in the Age of Aquarius made available ubiquitously to the whole of humanity. But, by encapsulating the threat of Otherness into narrative form, the world saved was a fiction as well, a sort of ship inside a bottle, inside an aquarium, so to speak.

So, we only have the Wachowskis own chosen representations by which to define the possibilities of the "Matrix Universe" metaphor for transcendence of reality depicted concisely in M1 and expanded upon ad nauseum by Reloaded and ad infinitum by Revolutions. Thus, again, we have Merv's definition of "cause and effect" and the overlapping similarities to Rhama Khandra's concept of "karma." We see that all the characters in the sequels, Neo moreso than any of them, are completely and exclusively the products of their immediately preceding and their implied past events. If, according to the "Matrix Universe" philosophy, one makes Choice A, they will then be presented with Choices B and C. If they choose B, then D and E, and if C then F and G. The garden of forking paths, the choose-your-own-adventure, the Hero's Quest, is presented here in noir et blanc, in binary, as much as possible.

This apparently inherent consequentialism, whether called "cause and effect" or "karma," is the product of linear-thinking of time's friction against all opposing viewpoints. This is the necessary conflict to drive a fictional narrative plotline, albeit regrettably. Now, given the inherently infinite capacity of the most innocent human mind for creative imagination, you would think that a fictional world could be envisioned where such rules could be "bent," at least, if not "broken." However, again, we have only the sequels to elaborate upon the implied philosophical themes of M1, and in these the Wachowskis offer us no new solutions, only reiterate the perennial tradition, substituting a fictional plenum for zero opposite one.

It seems to me that if the sequels did anything, it was, as max points out, but what I would call unnecessarily, to elaborate on the implied themes of M1. Now, the Wachowskis chose certain implied themes to follow at the expense of others. Although most of what interested me most about M1 was the ancient origins of certain themes, the Wachowskis chose to follow the philosophical themes chronologically in the sequels, and thus that is all we can really talk about, no matter how limiting this context. By way of example, if I were to talk about Egyptian mythology in M1, then in Second Renaissance, basically an allegory on Atlantis or Eden (themselves only necessary allusions), we would expect to see some seeds from which later direct references to Egyptian mythology, such as the Final Flight of the Osiris, would germinate. Instead, like with the more "official" versions of human history taught in schools, there are necessary gaps or "breaks" in the records.

The Wachowskis chose the "one-way" chronological approach to the presentation of not only the philosophical themes but also, again as max has pointed out, how these themes are "fleshed out" through the actions of the characters. Therefore, we see all the characters lack the omniscience if they were able to view the themes represented by the actions as not just cyclical, that is recognisably repetitive, but as actually themselves transcendent of the repetitive temporal cycle.

Of course, this is obviously not because the Wachowskis lack understanding of these simple facts. Even the most "primitive" bacteria is capable of experiential awareness of the full temporal implications of thematic or repetitive actions. It is my personal belief the Wachowskis simply chose not to allow any of their characters full

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

omniscience because they believe something that I do not: that only by the various-points-of-view method, the so-called Kuleshov Effect used so poignantly in the editing of Citizen Kane, can a reasonable replica, a simulacra, of the "human condition" be achieved... at least through an artistic medium.

Of course, one is immediately reminded of something Socrates, himself a fictional character, once remarked about art as being something like "thrice removed from the kingdom," by which I think he must have meant something about the symbolic representationalism, the inescapable expressionistic connotations, of the Athenian statuary of the so-called "Golden Age." I think Baudrillard shares this disdain for the "third-party" mediation of reality, and refuses, even moreso, to apologise for it than had Hegel.

Eventually mediated formats of symbolic communication will have to break down altogether. There is simply more information, and less time, than can sustain tensile pressure on either side of this cut-off valve we quaintly consider "art." However, for now, we can see the choice the Wachowskis made to express their philosophical themes through the actions of their characters as a necessary, and ALLAH BE PRAISED! temporary, evil.

As the Wachowskis characters each say separately, in so many different words, "this world is a chrysalis." In order to depict change, that is, within the Manichean dichotomy of as above, so below, as being preferable for the perpetuation of survival, the Wachowskis chose to limit their characters understanding, and then to show how it changed over time. For example, Neo's quest for enlightenment, Morpheus' betrayed dogmatism, etc.

As always on the Hero's Quest, the antagonists opposite the protagonists are depicted in estranged and alienated forms, which gradually give way to more beautifully mutated explanations for the same initial themes. For example, Merv's fixation on "cause and effect" is the western parallel to the eastern Rhama Khandra saying "karma is word." We are then expected to see the changes to the antagonists along the way as beneficially influencing the Hero's Quest to change and thus survive.

Usually, the antagonists are depicted as travelling temporally opposite the protagonist. They are merely retrogressive along the same cycle of events progressed upon by the Hero. "To put it country simple," as Burroughs might say, they are travelling in opposite directions along the same road.

However what this means in narrative dialogue is that the antagonist usually knows more about where the Hero is going than the Hero knows about where the antagonist is coming from. Any reversal of this implies omniscience on the part of the Hero, and tends itself toward the Messiah myth. By giving Neo limited foresight, and by repeatedly presenting the flaws of one antagonist being pointed out to the Hero by other antagonists, the Wachowskis build up their Hero character along his quest. As each opposite villain is met and bested, the power of the Hero grows, this is standard operating procedure. However, when the villains pretend superhumanity and yet are dispatched all too easily, this process inflates exponentially into the Messiah myth.

The alternative to the "forward" moving Hero arbitrarily negating all the misunderstood, "evil" retrogressive antagonists would have approached the same

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

(cyclical) philosophical themes as resulting from chronologically opposed frictions alone. Now, had the Wachowskis chosen to give the audience the benefit of the doubt of omniscience, they could have chosen to portray the sequels quite differently. However, instead, they opted to dumb down the plotline as much as possible without losing the philosophical themes altogether, and thus portrayed the Hero as strong, the villains as weak, and none of them as omniscient.

For example, examining the Matrix as a kind of time machine linking the distant future to our own present, perhaps the theme of the sequels could have been one of presenting some catastrophe of modern times through the seeming prescience of a more omniscient character from the future. However, instead, they chose to portray the threat allegedly implied by existential Otherness as the ultimate and final conflict before the inevitable dawning of transcendence in the Age of Aquarius made available ubiquitously to the whole of humanity. But, by encapsulating the threat of Otherness into narrative form, the world saved was a fiction as well, a sort of ship inside a bottle, inside an aquarium, so to speak.

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I'd like to also talk some in this thread about the illusory fallacies of the cyber/skin dichotomy when it comes to the physical vessel for the living mind. Right now, however....

I

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-ben

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee



Yeah, so anyway...

As always, this is only my opinion, but I'd like to talk a little about the use of VRAI and cloning in modern, turn of the second millennium AD science fiction.

Now, what I call VRAI is simply an acronym for Virtual-Reality and Artificial Intelligence. Essentially, VRAI is everything cyber, from the "body without organs" to the perception by a computer of a world inside a machine.

Cloning, well, that speaks for itself. It's the duplication along a genetic assembly line of an evolutionary template. People don't believe cloning is being practised yet, but IMO "cloning" has been around at least since test-tube babies.

Now, elsewhere I talk about the concept of generative and non-generative paths. A lot of people see cloning and VRAI as like the apples from the allegory of Eden. One from the tree of eternal life, and one from the tree of guilt. But which is which? We, now, after the fall, possess knowledge of right and wrong. That is why we falter, not because we know if cloning or if VRAI is "right" or "wrong," but because we know that EITHER may be right OR wrong, or, hell, possibly even both.

I personally am among the futurists, the optimists who believe that it is not necessary to take "the coward's way out" when confronted with this seemingly paradoxical choice. I do not see any better reason to spend trillions of dollars on war instead of on experiments with VRAI and cloning. I do not want to blow the whole world up.

However there are two types of futurists: utopian and dystopian. The dystopian believe that it may be necessary to kill off some of the "lesser evolved" human population, either through nuclear war or some form of natural disaster. This dystopian vision is often called "post-Apocalyptic" (after the Book of Revelations).

I myself am of the utopian camp. Now, the utopian camp is not devoid of in-fighting and factionalism either. There are those who believe that spiritual transcendence will happen for everyone with the coming of the Aztec Fifth Sun. There are those who believe the rapture will come for only some. I, myself, belong to the MOST optimistic of the utopian futurist group.

Now, in every way that M1 playfully hinted at, the sequels made nauseatingly clear: The "Matrix Universe" is a pessimistic, post-Apocalyptic dystopia. It stands against everything I value philosophically, everything you may even say I believe in.

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

What bothers me, I think, most about the fictional presentation of a post-Apocalyptic dystopia is that it requires a temporary escape from reality, a "suspension of disbelief," in order to present the fictional narrative. Thus, by presenting a post-Apocalyptic dystopia as fiction, the Wachowskis tacitly imply a pleasant sunny reality.

In other words, the Wachowskis nod to Plato's metaphor of the cave is, IMO, more of a sophomoric lampoon of the average bourgeoisie audience member retreating from a mundane work-a-day world into the world within a violent summer action movie.

A style of dress, gesture and speech which I can only imagine being called neo-noir permeates... no, saturates the Matrix trilogy. It is tolerable in M1, but in the much slower doses of the sequels the minimalist dialogue of the Matrix warriors comes off alternately hackneyed and stilted, while their fighting styles are pointlessly repetitive and their styles of clothing and dress truthfully obnoxious.

This is one of the main things that actually keeps me coming back to movies like the Matrix. Like a battered wife who can't leave her abusive husband, I can't seem to stop trying to find the Good in them. Movies like Blade Runner (of which the director's cut should not be the only version available on dvd), pi, cube, hell even Existenz, all eventually pay off. There is something valuable hidden behind their respective melancholy, paranoia, gore and bad writing.

To me, the Matrix sequels lacked all emotional appeal. The characters (or rather, the actors) behaved like robots themselves, which makes for very boring character development. Furthermore, I can't seem to quite get anything out of these Hollywood pieces of trash that I can't get out of watching all the other, better sci-fi movies whose premises it combines only to befoul.

While I am STILL here...

I have a couple more things to say about karma, or cause and effect, or free will vs. determinism, or whatever one wants to call it, as it plays out in the Matrix trilogy.

First, I think it would have better furthered the theme of transcendence, so essential to the story arc of M1, had the Wachowskis used recognition of the patterns of coincidences within the Matrix to lead Neo to characters of greater omniscience. I mean that there should have been more intensive context clues hidden in the shot compositions (both intra and inter) of the manipulation of the scenes surrounding the key characters in the trilogy, at least. The key-maker himself again is the only exception to this, with the pillars behind him covered in keys harkening back to the power plant.

This might have taken the edge off some of the "action" scenes somewhat perhaps, but the suspense would still have played (consider Sin City) just as well as the actual snot-nosed dialogue we get to forward the plot instead of any meaning following from such comments as "every floor is wired with explosives," etc.

All I'm saying is the Wachowskis could have used alot of techniques to drop better clues of their own omniscience as story-tellers within the context of their story, and left a more interesting "trail of bread crumbs" for the audience to follow through the

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

story's shifting contexts.

The whole plotline crumples under scrutiny faster than an electron struck by a photon when one is forced by the wooden characters and tin-eared dialogue (you know what's changed in the last six hours?) to question whether the Wachowskis, even combined, were really in control of the plotline and the characters while writing, or whether they simply let their imaginations run away with them?

It's quite clear, at least to me, that the character of Hamman may as well not even exist for how little good he actually does at explaining what the topic of the discussion is. And he is merely typical of my disappointment with the whole soap-opera cast of characters in the sequels.

And I swear the proliferation of Smiths was worse than any of the other, other than by fans unexplained, continuity errors in the story-arc as a whole. It's all based on how the Wachowskis view the audience: and Bane says it best when he says "dull cow eyes... etc. etc." Now, the fact that the audience is supposed to be left gaping like a herd of idealogical chattle is taken for granted with such scenes as the Smith-Bane connection, and the "suspense" of such scenes (will they have a good line of explanatory dialogue yet??) is meant only to distract us fools away from asking the real issues like WHAT DID NEO MEAN WHEN HE SAID SMITH HAD "FOUND A WAY TO COPY HIMSELF"? That, in and of itself, and alone, does not compute the entire fan-fiction equation of Smith with a computer-virus.

Of course, since the Wachowskis did manage to demonstrate in M1 their ability to "bend" the laws of karma, then we are all expected to allow them to present whatever contrived piece of garbage follow-up they like.

The Oracle's speech to Neo (and yes, that's a monologue folks, no questions being asked there....!) in the ghetto playground sounds alot like the Architect's speech as well: a bunch of non-sequitor general terms being thrown around to make the authors sound big. As explanations they are insufficient, except, admittedly, alone to drive the plot. And yet it is on the encounters between characters, and not changes in set or setting of the protagonist alone, that the plotline is driven.

If it were me, what I would do would be to start with decent enough characters that it is NOT necessary to rely on their encounters alone to drive the plot, and set the scene more by placing context-clues in the backgrounds that eventually form the pieces of the puzzle answer of "what is the Matrix?"

I suppose this will surprise some of you, but might not some others, but I am actually a big MWAM theory fan. I think that MWAM theory still hasn't gotten its day in court, so to speak, and, to those who would say it has, I would still say the jury is out. I, however, am an optimist, the last of a dying breed, and you won't see many old dinosaurs like me wandering around these halls of justice. I had the highest hopes for the Matrix trilogy the day of the release of Reloaded. But, upon gauging audience reaction, I saw my hopes dashed on the rocks as well.

I had hoped for the discovery within the code of the matrix of a dimensional nexus, a way to open up a portal directly to any other point within the Matrix system. I thought this would be a neat "bonus level" to reality, a kind of "glitch" in the system

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

exploitable by the hackers to be able to move (body-jump) like the agents. It would "one up" the Wachowskis above everyone else by lightyears. Alas, this never occurred.

Instead we were given this hilarious parody of an MWAM with the blue and red outfits in Zion, and the eventual trip to Machine City. Machine City... notice the architecture of the spires... how it so closely resembles the spires of the Emerald City in the Wizard of Oz? Well all of that is simply the Wachowskis using the Wizard of Oz to screw the audience over and deny us any reasonable solutions satisfactory to our better theories.

All of this bullshit ought to be causing some mental erosion by now, so I guess I'll draw the line for a moment and stop to recollect myself.

And while I'm STILL here...

I'd like to add more on the use of karma, that is, the input of data in one event deterministically influencing the effects in, and by dint thereof, the options comprising the choices available from, the next. We see this rule definitively established for the humans in M1. We immediately see it broken by the agents (that's impossible!) and eventually by Neo as well ("you moved like they do," ie. using the mind to move faster than light).

However, in the sequels this law is gradually warped and distorted, that is, bent so often and only arbitrarily by so many obvious disallowed characters, usually with no explanation nor diageitic consequence, that it loses all relevance as the cornerstone of the "Matrix Universe." This does not mean that this law, essentially a law of higher-dimensional physics, is effectively "broken" by either the characters in the trilogy, by the movies themselves socially, or by the Wachowskis individually. It merely means that, again, its explanation is obfuscated and subverted by the fiction of an era, and thus any real enlightenment of its nature is put off for a time.

The ability to manipulate karma, or cause and effect, or whatever you want to call it, does not derive from the "bending" of its laws. It depends on its transcendence. This is really the ONLY philosophy expressed in M1, and one of the main reasons why I love that movie. It is also ruined in the context of the "Matrix Universe" by the sequels.

To transcend the law of karma, or cause and effect, one has to "follow the white rabbit" in the form of otherwise apparently irrelevant coincidences, synchronicities, etc. whatever you want to call them. This also is a dominant theme in M1 that is not followed up on in the sequels.

Instead of finding clues of more omniscient sentience(s) by following the patterns of similarities between déjà vu, the sequels focus more on the direct control over these by the "free will" or input of the individual.

This is, of course, nonsense from the point of view of the enlightened. Until you have found the karmic patterns that govern cause and effect, you cannot even know what "law" you are bending, let alone how to redirect that energy and control it.

The Matrix Sequels: "Re-viewed"

Jon Gee

Compare the impact and even the importance of Morpheus' "splinter in your mind" speech to any of the subsequent bullshit pseudo-philosophical propping up of non-sequitor straw-men speeches from the sequels.

Now, a word about my comment in the original version of this thread about "philosophy as a fist fight." Needless to say, this was left unexplained, and highly under-rated, in the sequels (Seraph's line about "not knowing" someone... BAH!). However in the coreographed ballet-like gun fights in M1 there is clearly displayed the law of karma as determining cause and effect. This breaks down even more subtly to karma as being co-created by free will, as we see Neo able to "dodge bullets" partially because of its having been previously suggested, and partially because of his ability to think faster than the speed of light.

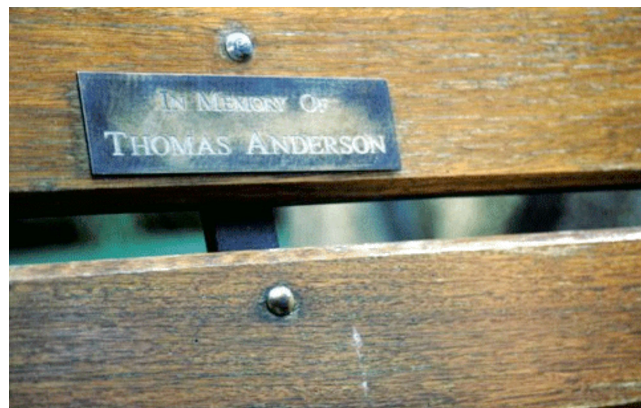
Instead, the sequels brow beat us to death with the "insolubility" of the issue of "free will versus determinism" until we see "transcendence" as purely caused by physical exhaustion: Calvinism at it's WORST! Of course, examination sans sequels of M1 illustrates the opposite lesson: that transcendence CAN be an active, even self-affirming process, and that nihilism (rather than plenary) is its true opposite. In fact, we see all the optimism I love about M1 dashed against the stalagmites in even the BORING opening sequence of Reloaded.

In M1 transcendence is presented through "rose coloured glasses," as we leave the movie still inside the Matrix, but, by identification with the protagonist character Neo, seemingly lighter-than-air invincible, able to see the reality behind the code. Rage Against the Machine plays, and one is left with a sense of immediate hope for the ultimate triumph of the underdog counter-cultures against the corporate business infrastructure.

However, as I say, the sequels ruined all this. Reloaded opens neither INSIDE the Matrix or OUTSIDE, but in a fucking DREAM-SEQUENCE! Neo is dreaming about the Matrix, and yes, it HAPPENS to be of events that later coincidentally occur within the Matrix. But that does not mean this is an example of "following the white rabbit," or tracing consequences between coincidences, in a Jungian sense, but more a Freudian commentary on women in the workplace.

Anyway, I'd love to stay and add more, but a Fed-Ex guy just delivered me a phone, so I'll have to TTYL.

-ben





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