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TAKING THE RED PILL



Science, Philosophy and Religion
in The Matrix

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#310762 in Books Smart Pop 2003-03-11Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x .60 x 6.00l, .85 #File Name: 1932100024280 pages | File size: 22.Mb

From Brand: Smart Pop : Taking the Red Pill: Science, Philosophy and the Religion in the Matrix (Smart Pop series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Taking the Red Pill: Science, Philosophy and the Religion in the Matrix (Smart Pop series):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. MindblowingBy ChaosChaos Theory18 December 2013Science FictionOrionScience Fiction has always been my personal favorite way of explaining the human symptom. Between the covers of every book I have read, more than just pages exist. The authors are artists who create limitless

knowledge and possibilities through the power of their own mind. It has taught me there is more to this world than what is physical. In the science fiction genre life is depicted as three parts; body, mind and soul. But just the same, there must always be two sides of a coin, the second trinity; passion, power and death. This second trinity can be shown by looking at media, commercialism and science in the science fiction Genre. Good vs Evil, love and hate, it is through these themes that science fiction portrays the duality of nature. The body or the physical, what is it? When Morpheus from *The Matrix* describes the actual matrix is a good interpretation of the physical, "The Matrix is everywhere. It is all around us. Even now, in this very room. You can see it when you look out your window or when you turn on your television. You can feel it when you go to work... when you go to church... when you pay your taxes." Only in this case the real world/physical is the matrix, which is why it is best to use real examples. The physical world, including ourselves, is our mind's projection into this reality, our chosen reality. Not only is it our choice to go to class early in the morning, or the choice between going to practice hungry or buying lunch but our actual physical projection of ourselves into the real world. I love physics, and from a physical science standpoint, the physical or the body are manifested through the mind using ones five senses. The Mind is the medium. It is the middle ground of the finite physical and the infinite soul, as well as the conduit or the catalyst in which the two communicate. Like in *The Matrix*, the mind exist in the bioport (the port in the back of the head of the rebels), or the physical of the real, as well as the virtual reality of the matrix. The mind exist in its very own duality of reality, a simple thought experiment; what happens when one makes a sandwich? First one must have the idea of the sandwich, imagine the sandwich, its smells, taste, look and the ingredients. This use of cognitive thought and creation exist in its own abstract virtual reality until one brings it into the physical reality. First one must make a choice on a soular level, then develop it in the mind and like a gateway it is brought into the physical. In *The Matrix* Neo makes the decision to save Morpheus outside the matrix, he prepares in the construct - the means of preparation- before entering the matrix for the mission. I believe it is from this view of the mind that Peter B. Lloyd arrived at this statement, "As we shall see, intelligence can be attained without consciousness." We know that machines/computers can communicate, make decisions and compute. Though this same argument can be said for the brain, which is a physical computer on a level. Yet Lloyd states, "one can report only the conscious experiences that are in the causal loop that gives rise to the speech acts (Lloyd 122)." We as humans, can change and make decisions on a whim, on a soular level, as well as express our emotion and ideas from the soular level. Lloyd briefly explains how this gateway into the consciousness is activated on a quantum computational level in the brain. Some animals solely act on survival, or the physical and others are capable of problem solving skills, with mental processing such as dolphins, chimpanzees; machines like cars exist purely in the physical or survival realm and computers capable of computing and mental processing now exist in the physical and virtual. With the development of quantum computers and the Internet today, we may be on the verge of opening the gateway into true consciousness. Agent Smith in *The Matrix* is a good example of the this evolution. When interrogating Morpheus he says, "It's the smell, if there is such a thing, I can taste your stink and every time I do, I fear that I've somehow been infected by it." There are two possibilities here, he's still within directive, interrogating Morpheus, or he is expressing himself. The senses of smell and taste are still abstract to him, but the abstract feelings of being affected and fear exist on an emotional level, or a soular level. Also his detachment from the other agents is evidence of his evolution. With this idea of a gateway into the soul one has to wonder how could others gain access to this gate. Because the mind exists in the physical reality and the abstract soular reality the path to the gate exist in each of these realms. In order to access/simulate the soul or conscious one must have the body with the mind."Humans have a cluster of properties that always hang together: they have conscious perceptions and emotional feelings, they have opinions and beliefs, intuition and intelligence, they us language, and they are alive and warm-blooded, and have a biological brain(Lloyd, 118)." I stated earlier that the mind was the medium between the finite and infinite, the infinite itself is the soul. This aspect of life remains abstract today because of the our scientific way of thinking. As I personally aspire to be a physicist, the road blocks I come to occur at things that become infinitely large or dense - such as the universe and black holes - and things infinitely small or sparse - such as black holes and the universe. Pope John Paul II once said, "Science can purify religion from error and superstition. Religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes (Postman)." The reason for this quote is to force the mind to think abstractly, away from the physical. Personally I consider both religion and science two sides of the same coin, the science of the physical and the science of the soul(Buddhist do it best in my opinion, but all religions suffice). Life is persistent, otherwise it wouldn't be infinite. In *Adam and No Eve* by Alfred Bester, the protagonist - Kane - is driven by instinct. "There was an instinct that drove him on. He had to get somewhere(Bester, 906)." He is driven to the sea by an unseen force, the ghost of his past. Kane had caused the destruction of all life on earth through an experiment gone wrong. A nuclear reaction created by his ambition to reach the moon, in a spaceship with a new type of fission propulsion. Throughout the story he is visited by ghost of loved ones, who help him push forward with his mission, crawling hundreds, possibly thousands of miles. This aspect of the story is symbolically representing the connectedness between all life and it's persistence to live. The ghost are not a projection of his mind to push him to the limits, but the projection of his soul, of all life on earth itself. All life is connected on a soular level, because all life is dependant. I believe James L. Ford said it best in his essay, *Buddhism, Mythology, and The Matrix*, "a piece of paper is dependent

upon a seedling, a tree, rain, soil, sunlight, a lumberjack, peppermill, etc. In other words, as much as we might like to think that we are independently existing creatures, in reality we are deeply dependent on the web of life surrounding us." Just as the cells in ones body are apart of a larger ecosystem of the self, human beings may be apart of a larger ecosystem of the earth, with it's own consciousness and beyond. Just as we are one conscious of trillion in our body, all life may be pieces of one individual soul. In the case of Kane in Adam and No Eve he is the life boat or the reaming soul of all life on earth. The soul, or consciousness is the essence of all life and is in constant battle with death. Passion is an intense desire or enthusiasm for something. Passion is also effected at the emotional level, or what I like to call the "soular" level, for all emotions are expressions of the soul but also the physical world is a mass projection the souls it contains. Passion is the primary weapon that is used against the body, it is the a facet of the unholy trinity that directly affects the body. Some of the most looked at today are sex, drugs and alcohol but include eating, laziness, TV, bars and anything else one likes to do. Passion can become a negative energy, if it is abused. The short story, All You Zombies-- by Robert A. Heinlein, is a story about passion and the effects of the physical. The main character chasing superficial dreams and desires is caught in a time loop. Where his passion gives birth to himself, and being in this loop, he technically doesn't and never did exist, such as possibly the physical completely. Science Fiction shows how the media uses passion as a means of control. Power is: the ability to do something or act in a particular way. To get straight to the point, the infinite ability and the finite act. What I really want to take a look at is control, which shares the second English definition of power--thank you Google--the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events. Death - the action or fact of dying or being killed; the end of the life of a person or organism; thank you Google, again. Can a soul die? This is an important question because the soul is supposed to be infinite, so how does one kill something that can't die? It must kill itself, or be taught to believe that it is finite; the ultimate sin in most religions. In Adam no Eve, Kanes dog, UMBER, is the representation of death. "Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, whereas all of Los Angeles and the America that surrounds it are no longer real but belong to the hyper real order and to the order of simulation (Gordon, 89)." This personally is the scariest line I had ever read. Jean Baudrillard in, The Precession of Simulacra 1981, talks of four phases of simulation. It had come to my attention that the media -mainly in science fiction- is a third stage simulation; it masks the absence of a profound reality (Baudrillard 445). In Kurt Vonnegut, Jr's Player Piano all the media, books, movies TV has already been preapproved. Everything in the book has been calculated by a giant computer, and only what the computer chooses the public will like is produced. There are no longer book writers, but people chosen to write a topic, and it is read by the forces that govern, passed and produced. Essentially, nothing is really being written by people, people are only the catalyst for the writing. This is the absence of a reality. Today, I look at the multitude of "reality" TV show's, which in fact are not a representation of true reality, but a reality that is chosen to be produced, filmed and sold as strictly entertainment. Kardasion is not a representation of the average American life, or the entire world for the matter. Baudrillard also wrote, "In the third(stage simulation), it plays at being an appearance -- it is of the order of sorcery." Sorcery, only one English definition, the use of magic, esp. black magic. Very touchy subject, but let's look at it today. Some of the stronger medias I find today are the Internet and television. Does one watch TV or does TV watch one? When I am sitting at the TV I know for a fact I am not out and about bettering myself. Not only that, but television tells me what to buy, what to eat, where to travel, how to live, how to act and in some cases if started from a young age, morals, views, dreams and hopes. On an individual level, without TV would I know how to live, let alone know who to vote for. At a mass level, one can begin to imagine how you shape a nations wants and needs through media. Baudrillard stated, "TV is watching us, TV alienates us, TV manipulates us, TV informs us(Baudrillard, 454).The Internet is a very different case. It allows an immediate connection of information, and even surveillance, but the greatest of weapons are also the greatest of weaknesses. The Internet has allowed the flow of massive amounts of information, basically an unlimited amount of both education and entertainment. There are social networks, which are large groupings of connected people, which tend to compartmentalize and separate us more as a species, but with this comes the spread of information. The Internet allows more people to search for the truth, what ever it may be to them. I believe the Internet, because of the flow of information, allows directs users to the truth, the river into the sea. More and more people are choosing enlightenment over entertainment today. It is a soular choice, and when it is made; media seldom affects your physical. In Kurt Vonnegut, Jr's Player Piano, everything in the United States is systematic. People go to grade school, graduate and take test where, their I.Q, skills and usefulness tested in mind, body and spirit(art, leadership, malleability, etc.)were tested. Their test scores advanced them to college to become an engineer, manager, the army or wrecks and wrecks; labor jobs, described as crude, rudimentary and strict. They are given homes, food stipends, appliances, entertainment where books were written by likes and dislikes on national surveys. All of this information and decision making is done by EPICAC, a supercomputer using probability but working within the confines of it's programming. Dr. Paul Proteous in PlayerPiano was born with natural talent, but mostly with the name Proteous, has everything he should need. He is a high ranking manager, high salary, high allowances, high (controlling, manipulating, materialistic and most of all, ambitious) wife and soon to be quite influential. An old friend, Finnerty, who came from the bottom, the wrecks and wrecks, tested, accomplished more then Dr. Proteous ever could. Yet all this man wanted was to go back across the river to Homestead, and probably

drink with the wrecks and wrecks. One day Paul decides to join Finnerty, when he meets a priest in a bar, Lasher. A turning point in the story that begins the plot, the problem of control. Now I find a certain genius in science fiction pieces, like the movie *The Matrix* or essays like *The Precession of Simulacra*, and supporting non-fiction such as *Taking the Red Pill.*; where authors explain that the red pill in the movie, is used to track the physical body, as well as a medication to shut off connections to the brain from the bioport (Lloyd 106). Or maybe it's about shutting off the spoon that's been giving and finding one's own. Elsewhere for Dr. Paul Proteous, *Homestead*, was to look into the evil he had created. A lack of creativity, strained limits and hard structures in socially, scientifically and mentally. Life had lost its meaning to most people, where they would give up and live on the system, there was no human spirit. I would like to take a moment to reflect how commercialism affects us. Jean Baudrillard's second phase of simulation states, the image will mask and denature a profound reality; in the second, it is an evil appearance - it is of the order of maleficence: doing or causing evil (Baudrillard, 444). Evil is the harming of others, all life, which includes all of nature. Commercialism, the control of the mind, seeks to control the medium by denaturing reality i.e. pharmaceutical drugs, pornography, money over resources, the Patriot Act. The example in *The Matrix* is a symbol for the entire systematic way we live today and how control leads to corruption. Lloyd concluded that the machines in the matrix were not after our physical power, but our mental capabilities. Laws of Thermodynamics doesn't allow efficient energy production, but the computing powers of our brains could possibly be used to sustain fusion (Lloyd 108). In the world of Dr. Paul Proteous, people are essentially being used as computers. Those who compute best, such as managers and engineers do end up being happiest and by the events of the book possess all the happiness. It is a top down society, not bottom up, yet the good doctor had to go bottom to *Homestead*, his own Red Pill too see this. Commercialism as a whole, is control and when you have the gate to the soul you can kill it. "The dog was emaciated and its eyes gleamed red in the dusk. As Kane called once more, the dog snarled. Puffs of ash leaped beneath its nostrils." "Panic jerked within him. a voice persisted: This is no friend. He has no love or companionship for you. Love and companionship have vanished from the land along with life. Now there is nothing left but hunger." The final two life forms on the planet earth are face to face. It is the battle between life and death. Kane must kill the evil he created through his actions in order to live, he must fight to sate the hunger to survive. After killing the dog in a scuffle, he removes his clothing, for kindling, to burn the corpse of his dog. His nakedness there after is symbolic of the a clean soul. If he had not killed the dog, the representation of the evil he had caused, the dog would have killed him. Because of this it is in the soul I believe the duality of good and evil, life and death arise. I have said that it is the belief of death that kills the soul, but it's also the fight to live and do good that makes it infinite. It is also here that the projection of our reality begins. Like I have stated before, I consider both science and religion in the same boat, but with opposite oars, so when I say, "science", I am talking of both. Jean Baudrillard's first phase of simulation; it is the reflection of a profound reality, relates directly to science and religion. "The image is a good appearance - representation is of the sacramental order (Baudrillard 446)." Science seeks to prove reality, through test and experiments, but all it can merely do is reflect, or represent our reality. Science Fiction directly uses science as a tool to represent the evil this simulation can cause. Such as the death of an entire planet in *Adam no Eve* through the blind pursuit of knowledge. Or the enslavement of the entire race of human beings by machines, created by man himself, to fuel their empire as mere resources in *The Matrix*. In *The Matrix* the human race is enslaved by a seemingly soulless race of machines. Thus far science can most certainly prove death in the physical, but it has yet to create life, with soul. The pursuit to create life, through the means of something that only proves death - like in many science fiction stories - leads to the enslavement and symbolic death of the human race. This is why the Matrix represents the fourth and final phase of simulation; it has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum. It is no longer of the order of appearance, but of simulation (Baudrillard, 446). The Matrix as a symbol of society raises the question as to if our reality is truly the one that is, and if it is, should it be? "Buddhism asserts that because we are ignorant of the true nature of reality, we perceive and experience the world in a distorted way. "Ignorance" may be misleading here because it is not precisely a lack of knowing that is the problem --it is rather a mis-knowing. In other words, we think we understand to one degree or another the nature of the world around us - but in reality, our perception is quite distorted (Ford, 130)." In the world today, passion, power and death are primary tools used to bring about the fourth phase of simulation. In *The Matrix* it is "the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth." As it relates, it is the idea that it only gets as good as Disney World, that money and class status defines who you are, and that in the end we all die anyway. Yet science fiction shows that, even in the face of this unholy trinity - passion, power and death - the existence of body, mind and soul will fight to live. In *Adam no Eve* Kane defeats Umber, and makes it to the sea where it becomes clear as day to him that he had to fight to live. To pass on the many organisms in his body into the small ocean that remains. The Matrix has many parallels to religion, especially Buddhism because the film lacks a God figure. Ford states in his essay, "through a formal ritual of declaring vows, one intentionally commits to the path. It strikes me that Neo's decision to take the red pill is a kind of ritualistic expression of his own intent before embarking on the adventure "down the rabbit hole." Along these same lines, the lifestyle of the rebels is strikingly monastic in flavor. Their food, clothing, and living quarters are quite austere. Indeed, Cypher revolts in part because he would rather live the deluded life of desire than endure the frugal disciplined "monastic" life of the rebels." To transcend the human

symptom, the suffering in the world today one must reject the existence of the system. Only then, like Neo will you be able to use the symbolic matrix to free others. Neo's last dialogue includes, "I'm going to show them a world without you, a world without rules and controls, without border or boundaries, a world where anything is possible." The irony that he must use the matrix to connect to the human race, or how Kane in Adam no Eve had to bring death upon Umber to live is symbolic that you cannot do good unless you understand evil. Nature is inherently dualistic. It is through understanding media, commercialism and science that science fiction depicts the properties of both life and death or good and evil. Life consist of the mind, body and soul or life essence itself and evil consist of power passion and death. Just as science fiction, life is symbolic.

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 Vonnegut, Kurt. *Player Piano*. New York: Delacorte, 1952. Print.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great, BUT...
 By Rick S. I love The Matrix and everything about it. I bought this book because I saw the opportunity to explore The Matrix in the form of a research paper for one of my graduate courses. I like that it is a compilation of articles written by different people on The Matrix. I did not read every single section, but at least on one of them I found an error in the argument one of the authors was making. Long story short, he misinterpreted one of the lines in the movie that he would have (and should have) known because of another character in a later part of the trilogy. Aside from that, I really enjoyed the book and am glad I found it. I just think the editor or someone should have caught that mistake.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Understanding The Matrix
 By Briona
 The book arrived within the deadline and in excellent condition. As far as this complex subject is concerned, it is discussed from different interesting viewpoints and with an accessible language. I have enjoyed the reading very much and now I understand the movie better.

This thought-provoking examination of The Matrix explores the technological challenges, religious symbolism, and philosophical dilemmas the film presents. Essays by renowned scientists, technologists, philosophers, scholars, social commentators, and science fiction authors provide engaging and provocative perspectives. Explored in a highly accessible fashion are issues such as the future of artificial intelligence and virtual reality. The symbolism hidden throughout The Matrix and a few glitches in the film are revealed. Discussions include Finding God in The Matrix, The Reality Paradox in The Matrix, and Was Cypher Right?: Why We Stay in Our Matrix. The fascinating issues posed by the film are handled in an intelligent but nonacademic fashion.

About the Author
 Glenn Yeffeth is a writer, editor, and columnist. He is the editor of a biography of Joss Whedon and a nonfiction anthology of essays about Buffy the Vampire Slayer. He lives in Dallas, Texas.