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Platonism, Cartesianism and Hegel's Thought in *The Matrix Trilogy*

Summary *In this article I will try to interpret changes in Neo, the main character in The Matrix Trilogy, against the background of the ideas of Plato and Descartes, as well as Hegel's from his Philosophy of History and The Phenomenology of Spirit. Although "philosophical" The Matrix Trilogy is not long-winded and boring film: instead of talking endlessly, the characters are working ceaselessly, and that work is changing them. Contrary to widespread opinion, this interpretation does not find the presence of Descartes' hyperbolic doubt in the first part of trilogy, but first film sees as a pure Platonism. Nevertheless, there are the Cartesian motifs (e.g. dualism, freeing mind from preconceived opinions, acquiring different habits of belief). The result of the first film is the position of Hegelian unhappy consciousness. This is just a preparation for the key moment of whole Trilogy that is the dialogue between Neo and Architect. Neo's decision to chose to save Trinity is interpreted in Hegel's terms of the infinite right of the subject to satisfy himself in his activity and work; because of that, this, sixth Neo is new. After showing the differences in the objectives of Neo and Agent Smith, and transformations of the objectives of humans, the third part of the article analyzes the very end of the Matrix Revolutions, using Marx's ideas, with some references to Plato and Nietzsche.*

Key words: *dualism, free will, unhappy consciousness, philosophy of history, Nietzsche, Marx, Neo, Morpheus.*

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There are traces of very diverse Eastern and Western lines of thought in *The Matrix Trilogy*¹, which speaks eloquently about its richness of ideas. Being "philosophical" *The Matrix Trilogy* is not long-winded and boring film: instead of talking endlessly, the characters are *working* ceaselessly, and that work is changing them. In this text I will try to interpret changes of the main character, Neo, against the background of some classic ideas of the Western philosophy.

The main thesis of this text is the following: In *The Matrix Trilogy*, Platonist, Cartesian and Hegelian ideas are clearly recognisable and on

¹ Films *The Matrix*, *The Matrix Reloaded* and *The Matrix Revolutions* are referred to as *The Matrix Trilogy*. *The Matrix* in italic thus denotes the first film of the trilogy. With an expression "the Matrix", I denote sixth virtual world itself. Dialogues will be quoted according to the number of a sequel (I, II, III) after which an hour, minute and second of their beginning and, if necessary, minute and second of their end will be stated. The films will be also referred to as the first/second/third part (of the trilogy).

their general level, plots of the films express movement (progress?) from Plato via Descartes to Hegel² – and further.

I

Platonism of the first part of the trilogy is evident. There are two worlds, a virtual world of the Matrix and the real world. They are strictly divided and their ontological relation is clearly defined through dependence of the former on the latter. Either on the level of storyline or on the level of image, the beholder is not in doubt about which world he is watching. That is *absolutely* the key moment of the whole trilogy: there is no doubt which world is “true” and which one is “illusion”. Whether all the protagonists know about it – is a different matter altogether.

It is impossible to resist Platonist interpretation of the famous scene with a blue and red pill. At its beginning, Morpheus approaches Neo in a philosophical manner, that is, by questioning things which are self-evident:

Let me tell you why you're here. You're here because you know something ... that there's something wrong with the world. You don't know what it is but it's there, like a splinter in your mind driving you mad. ... Do you want to know what IT is? The Matrix is ... the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth. ... You are a slave, Neo. Like everyone else you were born into bondage, born into a prison that you cannot smell or taste or touch. A prison for your mind (I 0.26.03–27.54).

Morpheus does not try anything else but something what Socrates has tried with his midwife skill, to deliver knowledge already contained in human mind in unreflected and self-evident manner: “Unfortunately, no one can be told what the Matrix is. You have to see it for yourself” (I 0.27.33).

There is no doubt in truthfulness of knowledge about what is and what isn't, nor anybody doubts the existence of those who know and those who don't. As a Platonic philosopher, Morpheus *knows* what the truth is (see I 0.28.23).

All this clearly indicates that in *The Matrix*, the Cartesian/Modern epistemological questions are out of place. Likewise, there is no space for Descartes' hyperbolic doubt, because the skeptical questions are not a constitutive part of cognitive process³.

² In a single public reckoning about the trilogy, Larry Wachowski, now Lana Wachowski most frequently mentions Hegel; see Wilber 2010.

³ See I 0.31.39, I 0.38.38. Neo also does not pose any questions about what is real. He would wonder how it is possible that the Matrix is not reality (I 1.05.38), but he would not doubt in fact that it is not reality.

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Could we perhaps find a Cartesian motif in the fact that the Matrix is a creation of machines? With the evil genius from the First Meditation in mind (see AT VII 22–23), we wonder whether the machines are the evil genius of the world of the Matrix. In the mind of a person who finds herself in the Matrix, Descartes' doubt can work to its heart's content: a person doubts her senses, doubts the existence of her body, doubts that she dreams, doubts the existence of evil genius, doubts her own abilities, and comes to the proverbial insight "cogito, ergo sum", *but still does not "wake" from the world of the Matrix!*⁴ You cannot "wake" from the world with the aid of hyperbolic doubt; for that, you need someone who has already "awoken" – like Morpheus. It does not cross anyone's mind in *The Matrix Trilogy* that the evil genius *perhaps* exists, because everyone among the "awoken" knows it exists: *if the evil genius is deceiving us, then there is absolutely no possibility that we know it is deceiving us, but if we, as awoken ones, know it is deceiving us, then we know it.* That is the fundamental noncartesian setting of *The Matrix Trilogy* and precisely because of it, there is no room for hyperbolic doubt – freedom is absent, even mere freedom of thought.

The third Platonic element disclosed by the Morpheus' speech is that the world of the Matrix is the world of illusion and that it is used to conceal the truth – men are enslaved by machines. Imprisonment of man has already been described by Plato with his cave allegory from *The Republic*. That explains why the authors have put a strong accent to an inner eye through which one can recognise the truth and the essence of things.⁵

One should not overlook the role of the Oracle, and to make it even less ambiguous, Wachowski siblings placed an inscription *Know thyself* above the doors of her apartment in Latin, written in German Gothic alphabet.

Morpheus expresses yet another important ancient idea: "Your body cannot live without the mind" (I 0.53.21). In order to be alive, the body has to be completed by a soul. However, dialectics which pushes the action away from the first part of trilogy is here also at work – one of the basic intentions of *The Matrix* is precisely the separation of the body

4 In his introduction for a collection of essays, referring to *Meditations*, Cristopher Grau asks: "Neo has woken up from a hell of a dream – the dream that was his life. How was he to know [that he has woken up]?" (Grau 2005: 5). True, that question remains *but Neo does not pose it*; he has not awakened at all, he was awakened.

5 See III 1.29.37; see also *Republic* 507b–511e and beginning of the seventh book, all the way to 519d.

from mind. The purpose of physical exercises and learning martial arts which get so much attention in the first film is to make the mind less susceptible to the influence of the body, to *teach* it that the body in the virtual world of the Matrix is not a body at all, to *remove* the habit of the mind to look upon the body that way and that physical laws the mind is used to in the real world are not applicable to the Matrix whatsoever.

All these are Cartesian motifs. For Descartes, our will is free and is a constitutive element of our cognition because we use it in our judgements. To tie it exclusively to clear and distinct ideas it is first necessary to tear it from confused ideas which stem from the body and its union with the soul, and which, together with habits, prejudices and preconceived opinions, add up to what Descartes called “teachings of nature” (as opposed to “natural light”)⁶. Descartes’ goal was purification of these teachings from prejudices and preconceived opinions, and *acquiring different habits* of belief, which relieves the mind from the influences of the body on will in the process of judgement. This is precisely the aim of all exercises in the first part of *The Matrix Trilogy*.⁷ The will is in such a way freed from the influence of the body – the same will around which the whole second part of *The Matrix Trilogy* would revolve. The final result, however, would not be Cartesian anymore.

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In the first part of the trilogy, Neo did liberate his mind, but his freedom is just freedom within the Matrix, freedom of the mind in itself which does not bear any consequences in the real world. The mind is free but man is still not externalized, affirmed in such freedom of his because, within the categories of the trilogy, that freedom is not also the freedom of true body, freedom in the real world. We read Hegel on stoicism: “Freedom in thought has only *pure thought* as its truth, a truth lacking the fullness of life. Hence freedom in thought, too, is only the Notion of freedom, not the living reality of freedom itself. ... But here the Notion as an abstraction cuts itself off from the multiplicity of things, and thus has no content in *its own* self but one that is given to it. Consciousness does indeed destroy the content as an alien immediacy (*Sein*) when it *thinks* it” (Hegel 1977, §200: 122) In the Matrix, Neo finds himself at the Stoic position of “subjective reconciliation”: he is free *from* the Matrix,

6 For the gigantic strength of the teachings of nature, see *Meditations*, AT VII 18, 22, 29, 35, 23. For the ways of putting them under control, see AT III 117, IV 296, VII 58, and VII 62.

7 “Do you believe that my being stronger or faster has anything to do with my muscles in this place? ... I’m trying to free your mind, Neo, but I can only show you the door, you’re the one that has to walk through it” (I 0.49.50, 0.51.18).

but he is still free only *within* the Matrix, the Matrix as such is to him still a given entity.

For the acquired self-consciousness and consciousness about freedom, a consciousness about its own split and the dichotomy of the world is formative. Neo and Agent Smith are the expression the Hegelian “unhappy consciousness”, and its constitutive part is duality of the mind and body. The effort to abandon it (with the aid of developing duality in all its aspects) makes up the content of the next two films.⁸

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Hegel has already described everything what would take place in *The Matrix Trilogy*. Movement “runs through these moments: first, the Unchangeable is opposed to individuality in general; then, being itself an individual, it is opposed to another individual; and finally, it is one with it. But this reflection, so far as it is made by us, is here premature” (Hegel 1977, §211: 128), because in the first film only the first moment is operative.

II

In the scene of conversation between Neo and commander Hamann at the control level of Zion (II 0.35.45–37.06) apparent interdependence between the people and machines, masters and slaves is mentioned for the first time – namely, one cannot exist without the other, insofar the idea that the people can turn off the machines that keep them alive does not mean that they “control” them. Philosophers have a notion for such a relationship: equivalence.

Parallel to the insight about that relationship, the problem of externalization and objectification of consciousness brings forth a question about the free will – and that is why this question is tirelessly discussed in the second part. Neo at first looks for an answer to the question in the ancient times, from the Oracle, and she answers by posing new questions and it cannot be any different because by her very own nature (both as a program and as prophet/messenger) she confirms the absence of the free will (II 0.43.45–44.11).

In the first film we don't even have an idea of the free will, because in the ancient times we do not have a modern concept of will and Morpheus

⁸ Hegel perhaps could also be of help with understanding why the liberated men in Neo see the Chosen One, one who would liberate the mankind (which is very pointed element in the first part); for that see Hegel 1977, §210–212: 127–129. For the Morpheus' faith in the Chosen One, see II 0.07.37.

(who else!) expresses that without any ambiguity: “There are no accidents. We have not come here by chance. I do not believe in chance ... I do not see coincidence, I see providence, I see purpose. I believe it is our fate to be here. It is our destiny. I believe this night holds for each and every one of us the very meaning of our lives”.⁹

Speaking in Cartesian terms, due to the spiritual exercises in the first part, Neo managed to liberate his mind from dominant influences of external determination, he is free from preconceived opinions about what is possible and impossible in the Matrix. We should not overlook that equivalent process also takes place with Agent Smith. He sends Neo his headphone through which he is connected with the rest of the programs (II 0.09.02), demonstrating that he is no longer tied to that fundament of his (but that he became a virus instead): “Because of you I’m no longer an agent of the system, because of you I’ve changed ... a new man, so to speak, like you, apparently free” (II 0.50.10). However, as long as it is only about the world of the Matrix, freedom of will is only a notion of freedom (or at best an arbitrary will).¹⁰

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Neo himself confirms the presence of dualism when he addresses the Oracle directly associating the whole thing with stopping the machines at the end of the second part: “Tell me how I separated my mind from my body without jacking in. Tell me how I stopped four ‘sentinels’ [that is, machines] by thinking it” (III 0.26.05). Separation of the mind from the body is a metaphysical condition of interaction between the two worlds, because the soul can be supposedly independent/free from the body only under condition that real body is an *automaton* which works well or not, *automaton* which is my body, but which is as such accidental, as far as the soul is concerned.¹¹ (It would be the same if I had another body.) Agent Smith, one program, takes control over Bane (II 31.30). Smith’s hardware is replaceable, his body is either not alive (machines) or it is irrelevant whether it is alive or not (Bane). What is left with dualism as a condition is pure intellect; thus the machines and programs

9 II 1.37.34–38.01. That is why Morpheus becomes irrelevant in the second part. He is an ancient philosopher who does not know what to do with the concept of free will, who believes in prophecies and fate, bound to external determinants.

10 “A principle, or rule, or law is something internal which, whatever truth it has within it, is not completely actual. ... For actuality, there must be a *second* element added – and that is activity or actualization. The principle of this is the will, i.e., human activity in general. ... The activity which puts them into operation and into existence is that which stems from human need, drive, inclination, and passion” (Hegel 1998: 25).

11 For Descartes’ understanding of the human body, see AT VII 14.

understand the world only in categories of cause and effect, goals and means for their achievement.¹²

In the second part, perhaps Meroving's French language does not point to Descartes, but the Architect surely does by using an expression *ergo* in the conversation with Neo. In that conversation all differences between men and machines appear crystal clear. That is why we are quoting their dialogue in its entirety:

Architect: Hello, Neo.

Neo: Who are you?

Architect: I am the Architect. I created the Matrix. I've been waiting for you. You have many questions, and though the process has altered your consciousness, you remain irrevocably human. *Ergo*, some of my answers you will understand, and some of them you will not. Concordantly, while your first question may be the most pertinent, you may or may not realize it is also the most irrelevant.

Neo: Why am I here?

Architect: Your life is the sum of a remainder of an unbalanced equation inherent to the programming of the Matrix. You are the eventuality of an anomaly, which, despite my sincerest efforts, I have been unable to eliminate from what is otherwise a harmony of mathematical precision. While it remains a burden assiduously avoided, it is not unexpected, and thus not beyond a measure of control. Which has led you, inexorably... here.

Neo: You haven't answered my question.

Architect: Quite right. Interesting. That was quicker than the others.

TVNeos: Others? How many others? What others? Answer my question!

Architect: The Matrix is older than you know. I prefer counting from the emergence of one integral anomaly to the emergence of the next, in which case this is the 6th version.

TVNeos: Five Ones before me? What are you talking about?

Neo: There are only two possible explanations, either no one told me, or no one knows.

Architect: Precisely. As you are undoubtedly gathering, the anomaly is systemic – creating fluctuations in even the most simplistic equations.

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12 See statements of a program called Meroving (II 1.03.18), but also agent Smith's (II 0.50.35).

TV Neos: You can't control me! I'm gonna smash you to bits! I'll fuck-in' kill you!

Neo: Choice. The problem is choice.

Architect: The first Matrix I designed was quite naturally perfect, it was a work of art – flawless, sublime. A triumph equalled only by its monumental failure. The inevitability of its doom is apparent to me now as a consequence of the imperfection inherent in every human being. Thus, I redesigned it based on your history to more accurately reflect the varying grotesqueries of your nature. However, I was again frustrated by failure. I have since come to understand that the answer eluded me because it required a lesser mind, or perhaps a mind less bound by the parameters of perfection. Thus the answer was stumbled upon by another – an intuitive program, initially created to investigate certain aspects of the human psyche. If I am the father of the Matrix, she would undoubtedly be its mother.

Neo: The Oracle.

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

Neo: This is about Zion.

Architect: You are here because Zion is about to be destroyed – its every living inhabitant terminated, its entire existence eradicated.

Neo: Bullshit.

TV Neos: Bullshit!

Architect: Denial is the most predictable of all human responses, but rest assured, this will be the sixth time we have destroyed it, and we have become exceedingly efficient at it.

Architect: The function of the One is now to return to the Source, allowing a temporary dissemination of the code you carry, reinserting the prime program. After which, you will be required to select from the Matrix 23 individuals – 16 female, 7 male – to rebuild Zion. Failure to comply with this process will result in a cataclysmic system crash, killing everyone connected to the Matrix, which, coupled with the extermination of Zion, will ultimately result in the extinction of the entire human race.

Neo: You won't let it happen. You can't. You need human beings to survive.

Architect: There are levels of survival we are prepared to accept. However, the relevant issue is whether or not you are ready to accept the responsibility of the death of every human being on this world. It is interesting, reading your reactions. Your 5 predecessors were, by design, based on a similar predication – a contingent affirmation that was meant to create a profound attachment to the rest of your species, facilitating the function of the One. While the others experienced this in a very general way, your experience is far more specific – *vis-à-vis* love.

Neo: Trinity.

Architect: *Apropos*, she entered the Matrix to save your life, at the cost of her own.

Neo: No.

Architect: Which brings us at last to the moment of truth, wherein the fundamental flaw is ultimately expressed, and the anomaly revealed as both beginning and end. There are two doors. The door to your right leads to the Source, and the salvation of Zion. The door to your left leads back to the Matrix, to her and to the end of your species. As you adequately put, the problem is choice. But we already know what you are going to do, don't we? Already, I can see the chain reaction – the chemical precursors that signal the onset of an emotion, designed specifically to overwhelm logic and reason – an emotion that is already blinding you from the simple and obvious truth. She is going to die, and there is nothing you can do to stop it.

Architect: Hope. It is the quintessential human delusion, simultaneously the source of your greatest strength and your greatest weakness.

Neo: If I were you, I would hope that we don't meet again.

Architect: We won't. (II 1.50.27–57.37)

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Neo chooses left doors and salvation of Trinity at the cost of risking extermination of the human kind. Judging by that decision, Neo is new because none of his earlier five versions has chosen an attempt to save Trinity.¹³ We know that because the Architect says that Zion will be destroyed for the sixth time.

The Architect is certain that he knows the Neo's choice: Zion. The Oracle is also certain that she knows: Zion again.¹⁴ However, the sixth Neo

13 By the way, the fact that Keanu Reeves plays the sixth version of Neo opens an interesting question about the identity of Neo because all previous five were, at least physically, the same as the sixth (we see that based on their reactions on monitors). In the first part, Morpheus explains to Neo that his look in the Matrix is a "residual self image. It is the mental projection of your digital self" (I o.38.28). However, how come it is the same with all versions of Neo?

14 "What happens if I fail?" – "Then Zion will fall. ... You can save Zion if you reach The Source", she tells him (II o.47.27–47); see also II o.46.57.

chooses the salvation of Trinity. Why have the Architect and Oracle made a mistake? On the most general level, they made a mistake because they have not realised that this Neo is not determined by the body, to a degree and in a way it has determined his previous versions. The Architect “can see the chain reaction – the chemical precursors that signal the onset of an emotion, designed specifically to overwhelm logic and reason”, without realising even that mere abstract division into reason and emotions is not operative with this Neo. He does not realise that human emotions are not mere consequences of occurrences in the body, or that there is a third element, the free will as a self-determination, which is not determined in advance either by insights of reason or by the body. The Architect and Oracle are wrong because they have not included freedom of will in the equations. Of course they haven’t – because freedom is incalculable.

Let’s put it in another way. The Architect and Oracle obviously have not read Hegel: nothing big in history took place without passion. “There are two elements that enter into our topic: the first is the Idea, the other is human passion”, because “a purpose for which I am to be active must in some way be my purpose as well. ... This is the infinite right of the subjective individual, to satisfy himself in his activity and work” (Hegel 1998: 26, 25), “What is *there* is the individual, not Man in general. It is not Man that exists, but the specific individual” (Hegel 1998: 26–27).

Wachowski siblings understand all this too well: “While the others experienced this in a very general way, your experience is far more specific – *vis-à-vis* love”. Love, that passion in Hegelian and ordinary sense, determines the sixth Neo more fundamentally than his previous versions. Neo loves Trinity and does not feel love “in general sense”. Thanks to the “more specific experience of love”, experience of subjectivity, self-determination and self-purpose, the sixth Neo managed to thoroughly liberate his mind from the decisive influence of external factors. Previous five versions of Neo chose the salvation of Zion, that is, their decision and their action were motivated exclusively by moral principles, “higher” objectives, and obligations towards human race or the claims of the Oracle, at the price of loss of Trinity. However, they *have not achieved their aim*, liberation of the people and the end of war: no matter how much they choose “the right thing”, act “rightly” and “morally”, they were unsuccessful. Very moral and extremely unsuccessful!

The last Neo has been determined by his own, very personal moment, love. Hegel clearly indicates that the categories of morality cannot be

applied to world-historical individuals because on the world-historical stage, a dichotomy common good – personal interests is false: “They fulfil their own interests, but something further is thereby brought into being, something which is inwardly involved in what they do but which was not in their consciousness or part of their intention” (Hegel 1998: 30).

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Neo demonstrated that the whole dilemma posed in front of him – one should bear in mind it is posed by programs (the Architect and Oracle) – is undeniably false. The following events would show that by choosing Trinity, Neo kills three birds with one stone, also saving Zion and terminating the war between men and machines. Bearing in mind the alternative, even the choice of Zion instead of saving Trinity reaffirms external determination of the mind. Determining Neo’s will in compliance with the Kantian “universal law” of moral imperative (and that is what everything is about!) every path led to destruction of Zion. Sixth Neo decided “not to be” “moral”, terminating the war in this way.

Making a decision to save Trinity, Neo becomes world-historical individual¹⁵, and as such he is new because his decision made by free will changed the evolution of the Matrix’ development,¹⁶ leading it towards re-evolution.

III

Dualism of the body and soul, whose equivalent is dualism of the two worlds, is brought to the final consequences in *gigantomachia* of Neo and Agent Smith in the third part. Even though liberation is the goal of Agent Smith, that goal of his is limited only to himself; in Hegel’s terms, there is nothing universal in his actions. Unlike Smith’s, Neo’s aim is not particular: liberate humanity (from “all conditions in which man is debased, enslaved, neglected and contemptible being...”¹⁷). Here also one can see how the relation between lord and bondsman works in *The Matrix Trilogy*.¹⁸ The initial goal of mankind is of a same kind as the Smith’s goal: the first is to destroy machines to liberate ourselves, and the second is to destroy free men in order to establish the rule. Meanwhile,

15 “Great men have worked to satisfy themselves, not others” (Hegel 1998: 32, 33).

16 “That went as expected.” – “Yes.” – “It’s happening exactly as before.” – “Well, not exactly”, (II 10.58). See also Smith’s words (I 1.29.17).

17 Marx 1975: 251.

18 I am intentionally not interpreting Matrix in categories of relation between lord and bondsman from *Phenomenology*. Who is a philosopher and hasn’t seen in the film a struggle for recognition, he should return his diploma, because another seeing is pointless!

the men have always consented to be slaves because their life was more precious than their freedom: Cypher is advising Neo: "A little piece of advice. You see an agent, you do what we do. Run. Run your ass off" (I 1.00.43). However, bondsman's consciousness has progressed – thanks to *work*, it has been educated and transformed, reaching basic insight that freedom without machines is an illusion. That is why the goal of the mankind has changed (instead of destruction of the Matrix, it is now the end of war¹⁹).

The conversation between the Architect and Oracle at the end of third part draws special attention both with images and words. In that dialogue, the Architect demonstrates skepticism regarding the durability of peace with people, adding that those who want to be liberated from the Matrix, will be.

The Architect leaves, and on a rainbow-coloured sky a sun appears, lighting the scene. If Wachowski siblings did not demonstrate a pointed dislike towards any kind of sentimentality, it would be easy to read a multi-coloured sky and sun as a total happy ending. Pathos exists in *The Matrix Trilogy* – Morpheus' speech in front of men in Zion or battle for Zion for example – but there is not even *a trace* of sentimentality, there is no use of emotions to part audience from their money. Besides, does *The Matrix Trilogy* have a happy ending at all? Also, the condition of its sentimentality is that programs have (very cheap) emotions after all, because a sky, clouds, and sun are a creation of one program. What is, then, the reason of such an image at the end of trilogy, with the finally achieved goal of human kind in mind?

Perhaps one should return to Neo's words from the very end of the first part: "I didn't come here to tell you how this is going to end. I came here to tell you how it's going to begin" (I 2.03.08). At the end of the third part, the machines recognised the right of man to be free, just like man recognised the right of survival to the machines. That is something new, that is a new beginning in their relations.

Therefore, in the relation between man and machines, for the first time we find two subjects which are mutually recognised, at least in principle, and which are together *producing* their relationship. If the trilogy itself was inspired by Hegel, what comes next in the world of the Matrix

19 See a difference between Morpheus' words (I 0.43.48) and an exclamation "The war is over!" (III 1.55.55–56.12).

can be explained by Marx: “The bourgeois relations of production are the last antagonistic form of the social process of production. ... This social formation brings, therefore, the prehistory of human society to a close”, Marx says in *A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy* (Marx 1978: 5). For this text bourgeoisie is not (so) relevant, but the fact that, for Marx, only after the revolution a true history of the mankind begins, undetermined by alienated certainties of the class society and exploitation, but which is the result of dis-alienated and free creative activity of man.²⁰ Insomuch, the sun from the end, but also the Architect’s skepticism regarding the durability of peace with men, mark a beginning of something unseen before in the world of the Matrix, a beginning of creation of a (new) world of men and machines.

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Perhaps such “Marxist” reading is not so incredible, as witnessed by Lana Wachowski towards the end of the mentioned interview, where she laughingly adds that her father, who strongly intellectually influenced her and her brother, “is perhaps more of a Marxist than I am” (Wilber 2006).

However, of course, at least one more totally different reading is possible. Is the sun from the end of the film perhaps a Plato’s sun? If it is, who sees it? Also it is seen and made by non-humans, mere programs. It is difficult not to remember at this spot the very end of *Zarathustra*: “This is my morning, my day is beginning: up now, up, you great noon!” – Thus spoke Zarathustra and he left his cave, glowing and strong, like a morning sun that emerges from dark mountains” (Nietzsche 2006: 266).

However, what is truly the most beautiful (because it tells us about openness and richness of this artwork) – is that one question remains unanswered: why is the third part called *Matrix Revolutions*, why is the plural used here? Do the Oracle’s words from the very end – when she says about seeing Neo again “I suspect so. Someday” – refer to the men who are like Neo, free? Do the revolutions refer to these men, men of the future, overmen (*Übermensch*)? If we have two subjects, people and artificial intelligence, does every act of making the mutual history is at the same time an act of revolution? However, do we have two subjects? Are the machines with their artificial intelligence subjects? Even if they

²⁰ “The coincidence of changing of circumstances and of human activity of self-changing can be conceived and rationally understood only as *revolutionary practice*”, “Third thesis on Feuerbach” (Marx 1975: 422).

are, the question is which and what kind of revolution it really is? Is a revolution without a will for power possible? Or it is perhaps perpetual returning (of the same)? Do the revolutions return just like the Sun returns every morning? That sun on a rainbow-coloured sky? Whose, then, are the revolutions in *Matrix Revolutions*?

(Translated from Serbian by Goran Gocic)

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Predrag Milidrag

Platonizam, kartezijanizam i Hegelova misao u trilogiji *Matriks*

Rezime

U ovom tekstu pokušaću da protumačim promene kod Nea, glavnog lika trilogije *Matriks*, na zaleđu Platonovih i Dekartovih ideja, kao i Hegelovih iz *Filozofije istorije* i *Fenomenologije duha*. Iako „filozofski“, *Matriks* nije razvučen niti dosadan film: umesto da beskrajno pričaju, likovi neprestano rade i taj ih rad menja. Suprotno raširenom mišljenju, ova interpretacija ne nalazi Dekartovu radikalnu sumnju u prvom delu trilogije, već ga vidi kao dosledni platonizam. No, u njemu ima kartezijanskih motiva (npr. dualizam duha i tela, oslobađanje duha od prethodno prihvaćenih verovanja i sticanje novih navika verovanja). Rezultat prvog dela jeste hegelovska nesretna svest. Sve je to tek priprema za ključni momenat cele trilogije, tj. dijalog Nea i Arhitekta. Neova odluka da odabere spas Triniti protumačena je u Hegelovim kategorijama beskonačnog prava subjekta da zadovolji sebe u onom što radi; zbog toga je šesti Neo nov. Nakon pokazivanja razlika u ciljevima Nea i Agentu Smita, kao i preobražaja ciljeva ljudi, treći deo teksta bavi se samim krajem *Matriks* revolucija i analizira ga koristeći Marksove ideje, s referencama na Platona i Ničea.

Ključne reči: dualizam, sloboda volje, nesretna svest, filozofija istorije, Niče, Marks, Neo, Morfeus.