

Running Head: The Spiritual Matrix – An Anthroposophical Reading

The Spiritual Matrix – An Anthroposophical Reading
OR: THIS ESSAY IS THE RED PILL

By Seth Miller
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The Inner Text

Perhaps more than any other movie or set of movies, the Matrix trilogy has inspired popular as well as academic discussion and debate, spawning well over twelve individual books, let alone countless websites, essays, and discussion groups. Why then should another essay be added to this already cluttered intellectual space? Much of the present treatment of the movies is philosophical in nature, but often its character is essentially topical, lifting concepts dealt with in the movies and discussing them externally to the movies themselves. Rather than using the movie as a jumping off point for discussion of related issues, it seems that what is needed is a treatment which takes the movie ‘seriously’ – as if the Matrix itself was its own key. What if we tried to enter into a reading through and with the movies rather than a reading *of* them?

In other words, I propose that we need to use the inner language of the movie itself (its sequencing, rhythm, color, plot, form, and flow) as a guide to its own inner coherency. Here I assume that the coherency of the movie is somewhat like that of a dream, and that its structure is coherent by virtue of the inner meaning of the overt drama and images. In other words, the sequencing of images and the developments of the plot are seen to have both an outer form as well as an inner form. An understanding of the movies that relies primarily on the outer form is incomplete – we must find some way to address also the inner form, the more subtle threads woven through the overt images on the screen, which when seen from a bit of a distance, reveal their *own* pattern and logic.

You, the reader, may rightfully feel that this is somewhat of an abstraction, for the nature of movies, as in the case of dreams, requires external contextualization to place them into hermeneutic relationship with the actual world. This is both unavoidable and wonderful, for it means that nothing exists in isolation. But if we then try to read the movie as an inner text, or more poetically: listen to it with the empathy of a lover, then the choice of starting positions will likely yield a variety of results. It is not the case, however, that every starting point is as good as any other, for here I assume that the movie itself actually contains purposeful content that, although endlessly interpretable, will tend to illuminate itself from within to the careful reader. Thus, reading a movie as a text is almost perfectly analogous to interacting dialogically with another human to try and understand his or her inner states, in all their complexity and paradox. We can, in fact, treat the movies almost as if they themselves were a being. As a being, the movies can be questioned directly if one takes the trouble to learn their language, their logos. And just as some beings are more internally coherent and integrated than others, so too some movies are more or less ‘awake’ and able to respond intelligently to probing. It is my experience that if such a process is undertaken, then one can have the feeling of being led, by the movie itself, towards greater coherency, consistency, and depth. This is particularly true in my experience for the three Matrix movies presently in question.

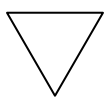
Because the place from which one begins any journey determines the potential paths that can then be followed, it is useful to declare one’s beginning place outright. My experience and interpretation of the Matrix movies is directly informed by an understanding of the spiritual science of anthroposophy initiated by Rudolf Steiner in the early 20th century. As I watched the movies, theme after theme was brought to light when I meditated on them from an anthroposophical perspective, and in many cases I knew the insights would never have arisen except by virtue of this particular background context. In fact after having watched Matrix Reloaded, the second movie of the trilogy, I made explicit predictions about events in the third movie that I thought necessary based upon the logic of the

archetypes and themes I encountered through my anthroposophical insights – and they were clearly fulfilled. I am not of the opinion that these insights, some of which will be discussed in this paper, are particular to spiritual science; this is simply the process by which the insights came to me. What is striking, however, is the extent to which an anthroposophical reading of the Matrix trilogy results in a clear and coherent depiction of the background context of which the images, sequences, themes, characters, and plot elements are manifestations.

Ultimately, my goal in this paper is twofold: to introduce and show how an anthroposophical context can help make sense of the movie in accord with the aforementioned methods, while trying to illuminate some aspects of the inner structure, thematic elements, and so forth, which are deserving of a contextualization which makes explicit, in particular, their spiritual content and context. The actual method employed and its results will become apparent as we progress, and its success or failure will necessarily be judged by each individual depending upon each reader's own situation and capacities.¹

Alchemy

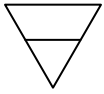
The question, of course, is: What is the Matrix? Although asked by Neo in the first Matrix movie, it is precisely *our* question, and like any good question, it can be addressed at multiple levels simultaneously. Historically, individuals working deeply in the alchemical traditions were continually called to expand their soul life so that questions, posed through a process of experiments, could resonate simultaneously on multiple levels. The purification of base metals into gold was more than a purely physical transmutation; it was an external trace or symbol of a process of inner transformation which was necessary for the alchemist's external experiments to be not only successful, but meaningful. Such adepts synthesized the various stages of the process into an archetypal template that could be used as a sort of decoding device when dealing with any process of transformation. One such template took a formulation based in the subtle qualities lying behind the substances of Earth, Water, Air, and Fire. This 'elemental cycle' from Earth through Water, Air, and Fire back to a new Earth, provides a useful archetype for understanding the multiple levels at which our original question can be addressed. What follows is by no means exhaustive or exclusive, but rather is simply a way to contextualize some possible approaches to the fundamental question in order that the particular approach I take may be clarified.



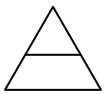
Earth:

The *facts*, foundation, and beginning point – the Earth – lies in the Matrix movies *as* movies. They are at one level pieces of entertainment designed by particular people for a particular audience, full of characters, events, fantastic visual effects, and so forth, existing on film reels, computer hard drives, and in the memories of many people. At this level, an almost infinite laundry list of details concerning the 'overt facts' could be expressed. The entire content of the movie inasmuch as it exists as pure image and sound are the primary Earth facts. Obviously this is only one aspect; what we need is a little water to get our Earth into motion.

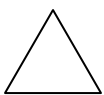
¹ I assume that the reader of this essay has, at the very least, watched the complete trilogy of Matrix movies.

**Water:**

The movies also exist as a *process* which takes place through time, both inner (phenomenological) and outer (clock) time. A certain *relationship* exists between different facts of the movie – i.e. the movie is not simply a sequence of images and sounds, but also is a sequence of *related* images and sounds. Here we have the actual narrative momentum, which itself exists only in relationship to individual viewers, carrying them, as it were, along the river like Huck Finn down the Mississippi; the viewer doesn't control the sequence, but is swept up by the experience of the sequence. At this level we find ourselves emotionally drawn forward, both into and out of ourselves, but often without understanding or deep comprehension. Additionally, the movies are themselves not created *ex nihilo*, but exist within a variety of cultural and social contexts, and are themselves connected to many aspects of the world not explicitly contained in the overt content of the movies themselves. Many film critics express themselves at the level of Water, assessing the structural flow and its ability or inability to weave together a worthwhile experience for the viewer. Yet the addition of the flow of relatedness to the facts does not result in a coherent whole – still we must work at a higher level.

**Air:**

The flowing narrative may suddenly take an unexpected turn, and in the Matrix movies this type of event is almost a refrain. When this occurs we are lifted out of the water and called upon to reassess things from a new perspective. Questions arise, filling us with thoughts, theories, and fancies. The watery thematic elements developed through sequences of sound and image are suddenly revealed as structured expressions of more singular and abstract ideas. Often what seemed to be a thematic trend is reversed, requiring a complete reinterpretation of previously unquestioned relationships, for example in the discovery that the Oracle is actually a program. At this level we encounter abstract themes, philosophical ideas, juxtapositions, paradoxes, even fragmentation. The Matrix movies found a particularly strong following in adolescents and younger adults precisely because of its watery ability to lead viewers into moments of experiencing deeply questions that force radical re-evaluation of assumed realities, which is exactly the kind of process commonly working through this age group. This Air quality also provided a rich soil for the discussion of the underlying *ideas* raised in the movies. The bulk of writings and discussions on the Matrix are most at home in this arena, where it is easy to swoop down and blow a few philosophical leaves into the atmosphere of abstract thinking for easier viewing. Yet if things don't proceed further, into the realm of Fire, then the experience of the movie itself, or the discussion of related themes and ideas, can end up dissociated from the fundamental Earth, leaving us a sense of hollowness. Although deep and enlivening insights often appear at this level, they may drift away on the volatile breeze of our thinking, their momentary efficacy evaporating, gifting us with only a dry husk of reality.

**Fire:**

Everything must go through the fire, and in so doing connect its end with its beginning. Here we find the local, internal connections working within outward from the watery realm transformed into a larger form of interconnectedness working its way inward from without. At this level we can address not only all the aspects brought forth in the previous stages, but we can approach them through a larger context in which the insights gained become *meaningful*. Now we can address the

overall development of the *whole*, all the way from the original facts to the largest patterns and context, i.e. we can look at things cosmo-logically. Often what results at this level is not simply new information, but better questions. In what way do the movie's images, themes, and ideas connect to larger unfolding patterns, and what may those patterns be? Is it possible to experience the embeddedness of the movies within these patterns in a way that provides us with the feeling of coherent, meaningful connectedness? Do the movies express the Fire quality of transformation, and do they find a way to potentially quicken the transformation of the viewers?

Because the alchemical cycle of elements is fractal in nature, and is descriptive of essentially any process, it is possible to apply it at any level of the movie: to the images themselves, to the development of the plot, to its heady ideas, and to its subtly embedded meanings. The transformation of each of these can be individually traced with the archetypal lens of the elemental process; like Russian dolls, the process consists of nothing but itself again at each higher and lower level. In this essay I will implicitly climb up and down this fractal ladder, flexibly taking what is needed from each level in order to weave together a picture meant to provide some illumination from a somewhat unique angle. But even Fire is not the end – for out of the inferno comes the ash of a new Earth, an Earth that has been transformed (and which will transform again). Hopefully through reading this essay you, the reader, will be led through your own alchemical cycle, and will find yourself standing in an entirely new relationship to the movies as a result. If upon your next viewing of the Matrix trilogy you have the feeling like you are seeing it anew, then I will be satisfied.

Anthroposophical Vignettes

Now for a Fire statement: It is my contention that the Matrix movies are one of the most accurate depictions in film of a truly contemporary picture of the inner spiritual processes working in humanities' cosmic evolution. This view, of course, is not in contrast to any of the other possible interpretations, but rather is in addition to them. In order to unpack this statement, a few introductory words must be made concerning its larger-scale background; the background in this case being some insights offered through the spiritual science of Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy, which offers a cosmic picture of the evolution of consciousness on a vast scale. The briefest overview of this picture, painted with broad brushstrokes, will suffice at present – further details will be introduced as needed.

Now for an Air moment: Let us re-evaluate our perspective and imagine the following: *We are not simply human beings having spiritual experiences, but spiritual beings having human experiences.*

And a Water transition: The important thing is the evolution of these spiritual beings who for a time are called to experience what it is like to be human – a time which spans many lifetimes, and through which we find ourselves connected to the wider spiritual context of the evolution of not only other human beings, but also the evolution beings of differing configurations, including the Earth itself.

And the foundational Earth: The spiritual research of Steiner indicates that in addition to the physical matter of the human *body*, a picture of the human *being* in its larger spiritual context must include higher aspects, such as a *life* body (called the etheric body), a *feeling* body (called the astral body), an individual Ego or "I", as well as higher transformations of these.

The physical body is well understood as it is the only one of the four aspects recognized by present day science, which is particularly suited to an understanding at this level. Because humanity is consumed by consciousness of the physical, it need hardly be more than mentioned, except to note that

were this all that existed, we would only account for the mineral aspect of the human – the corpse itself, which, lacking the formative forces of the etheric body, is immediately subject to physical dissolution, as in death.

One can get an immediate picture of the driving forces at work in the etheric body through the experience of trying to hold one's breath: a point is reached when one's conscious intent to not breathe is impossible to put into action, either through a failure of the conscious will or through the forceful expulsion of the consciousness from the act of not breathing: i.e. fainting. In either case, the imperative to continue the life processes, such as breathing, are attributable to the activity of the etheric body. All the processes of growth and decay are formed by the forces working in the etheric body. Yet if this were all that constituted the human being, we would be merely plants.

The astral body is a higher member of the human being that results in the capacity to take something outside oneself and mirror it internally through the process of sensation. The astral body forms our sense-life through the activity of our sensory organs, and gives us the capacity to *respond*. In particular, we can see the fundamental response in the polarity of moving towards or away from the content of any sensation, as in even tiny paramecium. This capacity for sympathy and antipathy as inner experiences distinguishes us from plants, but if this was the end of the story we would be essentially animals.

The reality of the "I" or Ego (capital "E") of the human is an experience so close to us that it is barely noticed, but we can intimate it through the act of meditation on all that is *not* given to us as experience through our sensory life, our thoughts, our emotions, or our own physical body. It is the thinker whose thought has no content but the process of thinking itself. This is to be distinguished from what could be called the 'lower ego' (lower case "e"), the ego dealt with in various ways by the differing psychologies. The "I" is the spiritual being who 'sounds through' the mask of the lower ego, expressed as the per-sona. Anthroposophy provides a background with which one can learn to trace the development of each of these fundamental aspects of the human being both within and between lives, individually and collectively.

But human beings are not the only beings in the universe – an insight not specific to anthroposophy. Other spiritual beings exist around humanity at various levels, all of which are involved in a process of cosmic evolution and which have some relationship to humans. We can oversimplify the relationship between humanity and other beings, which we can call angels, archangels, and so forth after the 5th century NeoPlatonist Dionysus the Pseudo-Areopagite, by saying that they work either progressively or regressively with us. In particular we must identify three beings which play a prominent role in the inner life of modern humanity – and in the Matrix.

We can speak of the excessive activity of the first being as bringing about the tendency in human beings towards expansiveness, inflation, egotism, sensuality, passion, and ungrounded spirituality; this leads to the idea that we are gods. The second being represents tendencies towards contraction, reduction, splitting, materialism, over-intellectualization, lying, and a denial of spiritual realities; this leads to the idea that we are material beings only. Both of these beings also play a helpful role and are in fact indispensable for human life, as the first awakens us to our freedom, while the second helps provide us with the capacity for speech and thinking. The first being can be called Lucifer, to be distinguished from the second being, whom we can call Ahriman, the Zoroastrian name for the devil. These two beings form a polarity of opposites through which humanity must make its way by balancing

one against the other so as to not fall into the errors of either one. This is precisely the path allegorized by Neo in the Matrix trilogy – a path paved by the third being, the Christ². One can see in Steiner’s breathtaking wood carving “Representative of Man” a depiction of this being of the Christ striding ardently forward, arms outstretched between the opposing forces of Lucifer above and Ahriman below.

Neo’s Names

At the beginning of the first Matrix movie, we find Neo *asleep* at his desk, surrounded by flashing computer screens, headphones blocking his ability to listen. This is a picture of the beginning situation of all of us: asleep amidst the fragmented contents and processes of our unconscious, our consciousness dimmed, localized, but searching for meaning. Yet the call always comes: “Wake up, Neo.” This is the call, the knocking on our inner door, to recognize that what we are here for is transformation – a transformation of ourselves that is simultaneously a transformation of the world. Neo, from the Greek *neos* meaning “new”, is the archetype of this transcendence, of the overcoming of one’s dream self, the penetration through one’s persona to the discovery of the process of the developing Ego in its cosmic context. Neo is thus his true name, his secret, esoteric name, the name by and to which he is called to awaken – it is this name which is the essence of his potential self, which is his function.

But, just as when walking a labyrinth we are led almost immediately to the inmost circle, only to be turned away on a long and winding path before actually reaching the innermost sanctum, so too this beginning is only an intimation, for in fact Neo has two other names, Thomas Anderson and “the One” – each of which he must identify with and then transcend in order to finally *become* Neo. This mirrors a spiritual principle that is expressed ritually in rites of passage, upon completion of which a new name is given to the initiate that more truly expresses the nature of their being as it works its way through a transformative process.

Agent Smith tells Mr. Anderson during his interrogation in the first movie, “It seems that you have been living two lives...one of these lives has a future, and one of them does not.” Thomas A. Anderson is Neo’s persona, an outward expression of identity, and is a false name to the extent that it exists through the play and manifestation of unconscious forces. The entire first Matrix movie is in fact a depiction of the struggle of the self-transcendence of Thomas Anderson into “the One”.

Thomas, in Hebrew, means “twin”. Anthroposophically, we can speak of the birth of a second being within us, a being not bound by the unconscious as we find it today but which participates actively and consciously in its own self-creation. Anderson, from the Greek root *andras*, “man”, translates as “the son of man” – but this is actually the esoteric phrase used in the Bible to indicate the Christ being. When Neo first enters the ship Nebuchadnezzar, we see a plaque upon which is engraved “Mark III. No. 11”, which reads: “Whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and shouted, ‘You are the Son of God!’, for the Son of Man is also the Son of God!” In the Matrix, this serves as a way to

² Although the name Christ is used here, this is not meant to have any connection with religiosity. We could easily use the word “Logos” instead of Christ, or names from other traditions, the Zoroastrian Ahura-Mazda, ancient Indian Vishva Karman, ancient Egyptian Osiris, or the Mosaic “I am the I AM”. What is more important is to recognize that what is being spoken of is in every case is a spiritual being of the highest rank, who has a particular relationship and interest in the progressive development of human beings and who provides a manifestation of what then stands as an archetype of transformation for all.

refer to the birth of the second being within us, patterned after the Christ being – a son potentially available to all humans.

Thomas, as one of the twelve apostles, had the particular trait of doubting the Christ being's transformation through death, until he actually saw his wounds with his own eyes. This is precisely the situation Mr. Anderson finds himself in at the end of the first movie, when he is shot by Agent Smith – he has doubted his own nature for the entire movie, thinking that he was not the One, until he actually looks down upon his own wounds to see his old life's blood ebbing away. Thus, Thomas Anderson crosses a spiritual threshold, dying as Mr. Anderson and awakening as the One.

Throughout the second movie, *Matrix Revolutions*, Neo comes to identify himself as the One, and takes up this new role completely. But this is not his true identity; in fact, anthroposophical insight helps us to determine just what patterns are expressed in this new incarnation of Mr. Anderson. It is easy to notice that the "One" is an anagram of "Neo"; yet the significance of this is generally not understood. Thomas Anderson is on his way to becoming Neo. Looking metaphorically at the letters of his name, we can see that at the end of the first movie he casts off all that seems to be holding him back, and is left with the three letters that will later form his true name – but the letters are arranged into an intermediate form, "One". Why? Why can't Thomas Anderson simply transform directly into Neo?

Anthroposophical insight leads one to a picture of the development of the human being, which at the present time is very much bound up with the transformation and integration of influences from the beings we have previously called Luciferic. Neo's feeling that he is the One is precisely the kind of feeling that occurs when the Luciferic tendencies work too strongly in the astral body. In other words, being the One is a kind of confusion that results from a misunderstanding of one's true nature because of a process of inflation.

This first liberation takes Thomas Anderson into a whole new world in which he has spiritual sight and spiritual power. He can "see" the code of the Matrix, its underlying patterning and archetype, and this sight allows him to transform aspects of the Matrix willfully. Colloquially we may say in a moment of self-inflation, "I'm the Man", where Thomas Anderson says "I'm the One". His new-found power leads his lower ego into believing that it has found what it seeks, and aggregates to itself all power and vision that it can. Yet, as the Mahayana Buddhist traditions have clearly pointed out, such an end is ultimately a dream, for the extent to which a being seeks power for *itself*, it will be trapped by that very power and suffer its karmic effects like any lesser being. Thus the point is not to become a god, to finally *arrive* at the place of greatest spiritual power and insight, but rather is to *continually become new*, to not be deceived that at any time one has finished the process of evolution. This is why Neo's name is so powerful – it is expressive of the deepest function of being itself.

In Neo's meeting with the Architect (whom we will visit soon enough), we discover that in fact he is the 6th 'version' of the One. Here we see clearly that the One is a category describing a function and state of a being, just as we could call someone a carpenter. The One is fundamentally a *role* that Neo fulfills, all the way until his meeting with the Architect and the moment in which he chooses the door leading back into the Matrix, when his role as the One dies, and he is transformed now into Neo. In this moment is expressed the last Luciferic temptation and its transformation. Neo could ostensibly be the savior of humanity at this point, but only in a lower sense, by 'reinserting the prime program' as the Architect puts it. Rather, Neo does something actually *new*: through personal interest in an *individual, other* being, Trinity, (which we will later see to be the expression of *feeling*), Neo returns not

to the real world, but to the Matrix, to the world of illusion, where he resurrects Trinity by literally putting a healing hand on her heart.

In this scene, Neo is expressing the archetype of the work of the Christ being. Something truly new has entered the Matrix, following on five previous manifestations of the role of the One, similar to the way in which the Christ being, as manifested in the record of the New Testament followed upon the five previous books of the Torah, the Pentateuch, the “five containers”. Spiritual science reveals that the Christ being is in a sense particularly active *between* human beings, in their relationships with each other. In other words, the working of the Christ being is not via a theoretical blanket blessing of all humanity in general, but rather through the transformation of individuals in relation to each other. Neo’s choice accurately mirrors this esoteric principle.

How do we know things are different before and after each transformation? We can see this clearly in three specific places. The first transformation is consolidated in the moment when Thomas Anderson, transformed into The One, is able to hold out his hand to stop the bullets of the Agents at the end of the first movie, primarily because he has gained *knowledge* of his new identity. The second transformation is made clear when Neo manifests the ability to save Trinity by re-enlivening Trinity’s heart with his own hand in the second movie. Here, the One, through a transformation and incorporation of the *feeling* life (more detail on this below), becomes Neo, but a Neo at the beginning of his journey. This transformation is echoed “on the outside” (in the *real* world) when at end of the second movie the “trinity” of Morpheus, Trinity, and Neo are running from the Sentinels and Neo states: “Something is different. I can *feel* them.” At this moment Neo has truly taken the next step towards the inner circle of initiates; he has the ability to manifest his powers in the *real* world by reaching out his hand to shock the Sentinels, a power the likes of which had previously been constrained to the world of the Matrix. Neo has as this point fully ‘incarnated’ into his name, *new*. Thus, Neo is finally Neo for the third movie, Matrix Revolutions. Yet this too, is not the end of the process – but before the next stage can be understood we must approach things again from a different angle.

Thinking, Feeling, and Willing

With only a few moments of reflection, we can come to very deep insights concerning the nature of the human being. At first we can be aware that a major aspect of my experience is constituted by everything that appears in my soul as *thinking*. This is a *capacity*, and I can experience myself in relationship to the world through the thoughts produced by this capacity. My thinking stands, as it were, apart from the objects of my thought, and this provides me with the capability of being more or less *objective*. I can enter into the world objectively with my thinking. In this realm I am entirely *awake*. Presently, humans are configured in such a way as to have the most awareness and control in the realm of thinking, an experience I can have directly and easily. I can change my thoughts with relative ease and consciousness. The thinking can be thought of as the *objectifying* principle³ of the “I”, and is related physiologically to the brain, sense organs, and the nervous system in general.

Yet I can also experience my relation to the world through the capacity for *feeling*, toward whose object I invariably find myself either continually drawn towards or repelled. This capacity provides me with a much more soulful way of relating to the world and to myself, as it does not generally become

³ For those with an eye towards alchemy, this is the Salt principle.

desiccated through the objectification of thinking, but remains at first subjective. In this realm humans are more or less in a state of dreaming. Our Ego is primarily dreaming in our feeling life, and it is very difficult to gain control in the feeling life; rather we have the experience that feelings ‘well up’ from beneath, from a place in which our consciousness has only dim access, and we find ourselves often relatively powerless to change the direction of our feelings. The feeling can be thought of as the *relating*⁴ principle of the “I”, and is related to the activity finding its physical expression in the rhythmic system, primarily the lungs and heart.

Lastly I can have a very dim awareness of another, much more subtle level of relation, that of *willing*. Intentions, which take place primarily in the thinking realm, are only pale imitations of the deep power of the will, almost in the way that a flat photograph is lacking an entire dimension of its associated reality, which we reconstruct in an intention. Humans are for the most part *asleep* in the will, and have only the barest intimation of its true working. We have very little ability to *change our will*, yet this capacity for creative action is in a sense the fundamental nature of the human being, and can be thought of as the *active*⁵ principle of the “I”. The willing is physiologically found in the activity underlying all of human metabolism taking place primarily below the diaphragm, as well as in the limbs.

We can see further that these three capacities of the Ego are closely related to the different bodies previously mentioned. The activity of thinking can be related to the astral body, the activity of feeling to the etheric body, and the activity of willing to the physical body. Where does all of this come into play in the movies? We must first remember that what we are dealing with is a fractal picture of cosmic evolution taking place on multiple levels simultaneously, but according to actual spiritual patterns which are understandable with the right background.

In particular we can see that the character of Morpheus is representative of the capacity for thinking. His name refers to the Greek god of dreams, so one might think he should be associated with the feeling life and etheric body, but we shall see that this name contains multiple simultaneous meanings as well. Morpheus is the one human character in the trilogy who is most conscious in the thinking life. He is a forward-looking leader, a planner and order-giver, the captain of the ship – just as our day-awake consciousness is in everyday life. But just as our day-awake consciousness, dominated by our thinking, is not our highest possible consciousness, but is really a ‘dream’ consciousness in the sense that we think we are the ones running the ship when in fact we have little or no knowledge or experience of our True Self, our witness or “I”, so too Morpheus’ reality is in the end a falsehood designed to ‘facilitate the purpose of The One’, as the Architect so puts it. Morpheus’ ship, the Nebuchadnezzar, refers to the Babylonian king who had puzzling dreams that had to be interpreted. Morpheus’ problem, as the thinking life, is the impossibility of taking up the process of this interpretation in a healthy way through the capacity of thinking only. At the very end of Reloaded, Morpheus says “I had a dream, and now that dream is gone.” Morpheus must transcend his own nature – he has to discover a truth beyond what has been given to him through his thinking, and plunge into the waters of the radical unknown. The only way out resides in the path of transcendence and integration of the thinking, feeling, and will undertaken on behalf of them all by Neo.

⁴ This exemplifies the Mercury principle.

⁵ This is the principle of Sulfur.

So Morpheus, the god of dreams, is representative of our normal day-waking life which we believe to be real, but is in fact a dream: the Matrix, an illusion – a mental construct. Like Morpheus at the end of Reloaded, our belief in an unquestioned and non-critical (as is Morpheus' belief in the Oracle) perception of the world vis-à-vis its assumed reality must be transcended through a raising of consciousness to the next level. This process is that exemplified by the struggle of Neo throughout the first movie in particular.

In Morpheus, we are also presented with a picture of what occurs when the thinking life takes primacy over feeling and willing: one gets shot in the leg. Our will life is fundamentally active in our limbs; our legs carry us forward according to our will, while our arms and hands allow us to accomplish deeds once we arrive. In the first movie, Agent Smith is after something specific in Morpheus' *mind*: the code that would allow them to access Zion. Morpheus' arms and legs have been manacled, as an expression of the enslavement of his will to his thinking life. Morpheus is essentially blinded by his own thoughts, and swallows the Oracle's pronouncements hook, line, and sinker. Yet this type of enslavement of the will to thinking, to Morpheus' own dreaming, like all fundamentalism, provides for extreme feats of will and stubbornness. In this case Morpheus is able to forcibly break his bonds in order to escape, although he bears the mark of a lamed and unintegrated will when he is shot in the leg.

Trinity follows Morpheus' belief, not because it makes intellectual sense, but because it *feels* right. She herself is primarily dominated by the feeling life, specifically in relation to Neo. She too has a deep faith in the Oracle, through Morpheus' example. She exemplifies the problems and virtues of feeling: in the beginning of the first movie she is on the run from an agent, and after diving through a window and rolling down some stairs she is locked in fear, gaze directed to the open window through which we assume an agent will appear at any second. Her feeling life (fear) overpowers her will-life to the extent that she has to say consciously out loud to herself "Get up Trinity. GET UP!" in order to activate her will. In Reloaded, Trinity sacrifices herself and even her promise to her beloved Neo to not enter the matrix, in order to try and save the whole operation, and thus humanity. This is a sacrifice of the heart in the prime gesture of sympathy.

Neo himself is the most unconscious of all the characters, particularly up until the end of the first Matrix movie. He doesn't display any complex thinking (in fact he seems overwhelmed intellectually by Morpheus' explanation of the unreality of the matrix, responding with an *action*, namely vomiting), and his feeling life is, initially, fairly mediocre. The only thing going for him in fact seems to be his ability to simply kick ass when it is needed – at least until his second transformation. He is a picture of what is most unconscious in man, and what has the most potential: the will.

The entire trilogy is a record of the process of transformation and integration of these three aspects, the thinking, feeling, and willing. The process itself is one actually *taken* by the will itself, by the "I's" own expression qua *activity*; i.e. Neo. The will is precisely what provides the impetus to transcend and integrate, in order: the thinking, the feeling, and then willing itself (sacrifice). Thus, Neo must undergo these stages, and as he does so, gains the associated capacities of...

Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition

Anthroposophically, the human being must address and transform the *given* and *unconscious* capacities of thinking, feeling, and willing as a part of their forward spiritual progression. At first our thinking is wild, uncontrollable, fantastic, and subject to all the lower forces of the unconscious.

Through appropriate training, the thinking can be brought into order through various activities such as meditation.

For most humans, the transformation and harmonization of these three capacities is done in a de-facto way, primarily through unconscious forces (through which both progressive and regressive beings work). In other words, it is not the case that one must become a meditator in order for this process of transformation to occur. Luckily things have been structured in such a way that the very process of living life itself can lead us forward. For these people, it is enough just to be ‘normal’, and no judgment is associated with this.

At the same time, however, a certain section of humanity finds itself interested in the process of self-transformation in a more direct and *conscious* way. If one becomes serious about this process, then one begins to take on responsibility for one’s own development; this is the process of becoming an initiate.

In the first Matrix movie, this is precisely the step Neo (as Thomas Anderson) takes when he answers the call to wake up, which is carried out in an act of will that is as yet unconscious in the moment when Morpheus presents him a *choice* between the red and blue pills. The red pill represents in part the Luciferic path of true knowledge, the desire for transcendence and going beyond into the spiritual world. The blue pill, on the other hand, we can imagine containing water from the river Lethe, which causes us to forget the seeking for truth, so that truth can be replaced with the ahrimanic lie that *is* the matrix itself. Needless to say, Neo has *no idea* what he is getting himself into, but has an *intuition* (associated with the life of the will as expressed in Neo) that this is the only path that holds a future for him. All of us who make a similar commitment are in this position of having to give up all that we thought we knew for what could be termed the radical unknown, and we have only our intention, the shell of our will, to keep us on the path as our world crumbles around us. Neo expresses his connection to just this aspect of the human condition when Morpheus asks Neo before offering him the pills: “Do you believe in fate, Neo?” Neo’s response, “No, because I don’t like the idea that I’m not in control of my life” hits the mark for a being who is taking the first steps towards responsibility for self-development. This desire to be self-determining is the driving force behind the choice to take the next step.

When Neo is then taken out of the Matrix, he becomes encompassed by fluid mirror substance. This is a direct expression of the way in which, when we consciously take on the process of self-transformation, everything which seemed to be ‘real’, *in particular* our own self, is seen to be a morphing surface with no content other than something *else*. We become a reflection of the world around us, and we begin to see just how much of our “self” is in fact the product of precisely that which is not *me*. This is the process of deconstruction necessary for any initiate – a realization that we are not what we thought we were – and it usually occurs before we are given a positive realization of our true self, in order that we truly let go of our old persona.

Thus Neo is taken forcibly out of the Matrix and finds himself being birthed anew from another sort of womb⁶ - this one a bizarre combination of the liquefied dead and mechanical input-output systems designed to control the human body. Neo himself is like a new-born baby; he has never used his muscles or his eyes, and he is relatively formless, almost a blank slate. This is a good analogy for

⁶ One of the literal meanings of the word “Matrix” is womb.

the feeling that occurs when the neophyte takes the initial steps on the path. The waking process necessarily involves a messy realization – not a *thinking* realization, a directly experienced realization – that what has been our environment and our unconscious source of energy thus far we see is now constituted by dead structures inherited from past lives. We find ourselves swimming in the detritus of defunct habits and patterns, which coat and cling to us like slime. This experience is followed immediately by a correlate: that the bulk of humanity is still asleep, in a state of inner torpor, unaware of the “real world”, their own willingness to stay unconscious of their condition providing other beings ample opportunity to prey on their energies, which are uncontrolled and unconscious, and thus easily given over. Needless to say, this path is a difficult one, with many hard realizations that can often begin with despair. Alchemically, this is the process of calcination – the burning away of all that does not serve the future transformation.

The first Matrix movie deals with Neo’s acceptance of this path of transformation, culminating in his actual awakening at the end of the film through his death as Thomas Anderson. Neo wakes up as the One, and this waking up is his enlightenment – the recognition of a higher cosmic situation and our place within it, not just *intellectually* as in the case of Morpheus telling Neo that all his life was a dream, but *actually*. Anthroposophically, this is the transformation of thinking – a process which results in a new capacity, called *Imagination*. Not to be confused with fantasy, Imagination is a capacity for higher seeing in the spiritual world – it is a seeing not limited to the fantasy life (the illusion of the Matrix), but is what gets us in contact with something real. Thus we see there is a dual aspect to this transformation, one being an intellectual waking up (to the reality of the Matrix as a dream), and secondly to the transformation of that intellectual thought into an actual experience of knowing *Imaginatively* – which is an expression of the difference between knowledge *per se* and wisdom.

After taking the red pill (the pill of Lucifer, of *knowledge* of the spiritual world), Neo undergoes a process of intense training. His eyes are closed, and like a meditant he is involved in transforming his thinking. Although he knows intellectually, abstractly, that the Matrix is not what it seems, he must sublimate this understanding through a real transformation of his thinking life. This occurs particularly clearly in the martial arts training program with Morpheus, where Neo is admonished into realizing that it is not what he *thinks* but what he *knows*. This occurs for example in Morpheus’ question “You think that’s air you’re breathing?” to a winded Neo, and then in his push to make Neo realize that he *is* “faster than that [what he thinks]”. Also Neo himself, when placed into the “jump program”, repeats to himself the refrain “free my mind”.

Neo’s training of his thinking results ultimately in his new found ability to *see* the true nature of the Matrix itself, to see the spiritual reality behind the images, i.e. the Matrix code. The thinking, as previously mentioned before, is associated with the astral body, and the transformation of this results a purified astral body which allows us to be conscious at a higher level, in the level of spiritual seeing which is Imagination. By transforming his thinking, Neo has gained the capacity to be awake in the world of the dream. This is the true transcendence of the intellect – a true knowledge that penetrates beneath the surfaces of the image to reveal its inner spiritual archetype. Neo now has the capacity to live *Imaginatively* in the world of images: the world of the matrix. In other words, through this capacity, the static forms and laws of the image-world become mutable, because they are seen to be images – by getting in touch with the higher archetype behind the images, they are made to serve humanity rather than vice versa – thus strange yogic-like powers are gained like wall-running and

impossible jumps, etc. This transformation is also what was required for Neo to work in a cosmically specific way with Agent Smith, a topic discussed later in this essay. We can see this need to begin with the transformation of the thinking capacity played out symbolically in Neo's decision to re-enter the matrix in order to save Morpheus, representative of the thinking.

The entire first movie is in fact related to the dilemma of the astral body, to the body of desires and appetites, to the training and transcendence of thinking, to the overcoming of these tendencies in enlightenment. Psychologically, Neo had to go through a process of changing the way he *thought* about himself. He had to accept his seeming identity as an average person in order to transcend it – which can only be done by dealing in full reality with the possibility that he *was* just an average person. If Neo tried to evade or deny the persona/mask of an average person, he would never have really confronted it, and thus couldn't discover its meaning, and his destiny beyond and through it. He had to die *as* an average person in order to live *through* the complete, full reality of being an average person, so that he could transcend it to become something “new”. This is the lower aspect. The higher aspect of the same thing: Neo, under the Ahrimanic sway of the matrix, believes he is NOT the One. This occurs through the subtle working of Ahriman, whose attempt at keeping humanity from realizing its true spiritual potential utilizes fear to squash the possibility of entertaining the idea that we can enter the spiritual world as spiritual beings. But of course this backfires because as the archetype for human development, Neo takes his not believing in himself as the One (his Thomas nature at work) as an unexpected, creative gesture that couldn't be foreseen by the Architect, and uses it to begin the process of *actually* becoming the One. One must give up one's IDEA, held in the thinking, of oneself to become who one truly is. Why? Because we ARE the process of becoming, not the thing which has already become. Letting go of the idea that he might be the One freed him from an astral bond (forged by the polarity of ahrimanic fear and luciferic desire in a sort of double-team effort) that kept his Ego from engaging with the process of his potential destiny, thus allowing him the freedom to discover and create himself as the One. We are literally bound in our soul life by our ideas, because they are fixed. In other words, Neo could become the One because he transcended the idea that he could be the One – he had worked through the astral bonds linking his Ego to the concept, so his Ego was free to choose... to meet his karma.

We see a foil of Neo's transformation of thinking in the Judas character of Cypher. It should be clear at this point that essentially every character in the movies has a higher cosmologically-derived meaning. It would be impractical to express every detail of this correspondence for each character, but it may be helpful to give a more in-depth perspective in the case of Cypher so that it is shown how the details of the movie itself bear out the cosmic context.

A Detour: Cypher

The name Cypher, like all the names of characters in the Matrix, has multiple meanings. Mathematically the word is used to denote “having no quantity or magnitude”; “zero”. Cypher is a man who feels himself to be a man of no value or importance – he fears he is a zero. He is frustrated at having to continually take orders from Morpheus. These feelings are a result of the forces of Ahriman, of the constriction and contraction into meaninglessness of the individual, its dissection into nothing of importance. At the same time a cipher is a secret method of writing formed through symbolic code – which is Cypher's function on the ship “Logos”: to de-cipher the code of the Matrix. This aspect of his character embodies a certain amount of secretiveness, of hiding from the sight of others. Because at first

Cypher falls prey to an ahrimanic tendency for self-deprecation, he sets himself up for a luciferic fall into a desire for power and sensuality, for ego inflation. In his secret meeting with Agent Smith, after eating a juicy piece of steak and stating that “ignorance is bliss,” Cypher intones “I don’t want to remember nothing – *nothing*, you understand. And I want to be rich – someone important, like an actor.” Smith’s response to this is telling: “Whatever you want, Mr. Reagan.”

This entire exchange is an archetypal expression of the way in which Cypher falls prey to the luciferic forces because of having identified too strongly with the ahrimanic. He himself thus becomes like Lucifer by succumbing to the sensuality and play of *light* that is the matrix. Thus Cypher becomes subject to Lu-cypher; Lucifer promises to fill his ahrimanic, mathematical de-valuation with worldly, sensual gifts. Lucifer will always give you what you *want*, but not what you *need* for self transformation. Let us look further at the way in which Cypher plays out in the movie part of the cosmic drama of human evolution in his role as a Judas who succumbs to Lucifer by simply making a list of comparisons.

Judas is a disciple of Jesus, as Cypher is a follower of Morpheus. Cypher’s betrayal was in exchange for 30 pieces of silver, a means to material sensual ends, just as the steak is the representation of a life lived in service of one’s lower sensual self. Both betrayals are sealed over a meal, in the Last Supper and in what ends up being Cypher’s last supper with Agent Smith. Judas shares a drink with Jesus during this meal, while Cypher and Neo share a drink at the computer station just before Cypher jacks in for his meeting. Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss, and Cypher betrayed Morpheus with a sneeze. In both cases, the betrayal involved revealing to the enemy the man’s precise location so he could be captured. Cypher wears red clothing, with a hole over his heart (through which Lucifer enters), and has a goatee – both of which are symbolic of Lucifer, the devil. Cypher tells Trinity not to have him because he is “just a messenger,” just as in the Bible Lucifer refers to himself as “the messenger”, i.e. an angel, but a fallen angel. All of these comparisons point to the larger picture of the way in which humans can fall into a luciferic overindulgence, while at the same time pointing to the fact that this was a necessary part of the unfolding drama of human evolution, which could not have progressed into freedom without the ability to be overwhelmed in this way. Anthroposophy provides a specific, coherent framework from which events like these can be understood both in their details and in their larger context.

Inspiration

Just as the first movie is entirely situated within the realm of the transformation of the thinking capacity and the astral body, so too in *Revolutions* do we see the next lawful stage of transformation: that of the etheric body and the feeling life. The entire movie in some way deals with this dilemma, and we see its expression in moments such as the dance scene in *Zion*, which emphasizes precisely this capacity of feeling and revelry which is lacking in both the machines and the programs, as well as in the compassionate way in which Neo treats all of the Zionists who see him as a Christ-figure. Neo’s relationship with Trinity in *Revolutions* is consummated and fulfilled, and they are joined in all but name through the bond of love – i.e. Neo is no longer a sort of dull robot following instructions from without (from the thinking capacity of Morpheus), but is moved primarily from within, even to the point of following a choice made in his heart to save Trinity rather than all of humanity – a feeling moment if there ever was one.

The transformation of the feeling life takes place primarily in *Revolutions* again in two forms which follow an expression of the feeling life as the *relating* capacity of the “I”. First we find Neo racing to save Trinity, where he must resuscitate her (remember the relation between the feeling life and the rhythmic systems of the human: the lungs and heart) from the *inside* out. Neo can see, with the help of his newly gained capacity for Imagination, the underlying structure of Trinity’s body, but now something more than seeing is required – he must actually penetrate this body, Trinity’s etheric body, in order to reach in and grab her heart, the seat of feeling, in order re-animate it. Neo has transformed his own etheric body, expressed symbolically in the figure of Trinity, the representation of the life of feeling, into the capacity for *Inspiration*. This capacity is not, like the Imagination, limited to activity only within the matrix itself, but, as a transformation of the actual formative forces underlying the organizing principle of life in the body, this capacity can find manifestation in the *real* world, as is demonstrated by Neo when he states that he can *feel* the squiddies, and then subsequently stops them through an apparently mysterious gesture with his hand that is suspiciously like the gesture taken towards Trinity’s heart. We see how an anthroposophically informed understanding can coherently illuminate what otherwise might seem mysterious. Neo’s capacity to feel and manipulate the actual machines in the real world is nothing other than an expression of the process of transformation of his etheric body. Neo has now the capacity for relatedness in which what is living at a level more fundamental than that of the image is accessible to him. His feeling life has developed so that he can see in a feeling way through the reality of what is around him, specifically into the *heart* of his enemies.

Intuition

Lastly, we can complete the picture by examining how the third movie, *Matrix Revolutions*, is a further embodiment and lawful expression of the patterns begun in the first two movies. In this case, we are dealing with all that is related to the physical world, and the associated transformation of the will itself into the higher capacity of Intuition. Whereas with *Inspiration* we have a sort of higher ‘hearing’ of the spiritual world, through which it reveals its creative forces and order, in the capacity of Intuition we have a stage in which an intuitive penetration into the sphere of the actual beings themselves becomes possible. In other words, we find the ability to in some sense be united with other beings in their very core. Imagination connects us through the astral body to the patterns lying behind the process of thinking, *Inspiration* connects us through the etheric body to the formative forces lying behind the processes of feeling, while Intuition connects us through the physical body to the fundamental will process itself – thus allowing a sort of unmediated contact between two beings.

Of all the movies, *Revolutions* takes place overwhelmingly in the *real, physical* world. We can see its importance clearly in the overwhelmingly physical war with the machines, and the many scenes that physically contextualize the place of Zion and in the machine city through the theme of tunnels and conduits. Additionally it is in this movie that Smith takes on physical form as Bane, while we also witness the physical death of Trinity as well as that of Neo himself.

In *Revolutions*, the path of Neo is one of transformation of the foundation of the “I” qua will, which again manifests in two forms. The first is when Neo, after taking some time alone, “knows what [he] has to do” – to penetrate directly into the heart of the machine city. This knowledge comes from Neo’s Intuition, expressed in his visions of the power conduits that lead to the heart of the machine city. These power conduits, a series of three, can be seen as symbolic of the fundamental power of the “I”

underlying the working of the machines, as it manifests in the capacity for thinking, feeling, and willing itself. Neo has gained the capacity to connect directly to the underlying being of the machines, but he fears that his decision can mean nothing other than his certain death. Yet he is absolutely certain of the necessity of this action, although it is unexplainable. In fact he doesn't even bother to explain it to anyone because he knows it is futile, as the Intuition is, to him and *only* him, utterly transparent. To everyone else but Trinity (and Morpheus as well, if he knew), Neo's willful decision is madness and suicide. Yet because Neo at this stage has transformed his thinking and his feeling, they are both 'on board' as it were. Now the time for action has come – everything in the previous two movies has led up to Neo's confrontation with both the head of the machine city in the physical world and Smith inside the matrix. The process of the transformation of will takes place in subtle stages, essentially behind the scenes, but a few moments are truly indicative.

Neo has an opportunity to meet with Smith in his incarnation as Bane while on the way to the machine city. During their struggle, Neo is physically blinded by the rage of Smith/Bane, and his eyes are permanently closed to the physical world. This is an intimation that Neo is approaching the last stages of his transformation. His loss of physical sight, although intended to have negative consequences, in fact serves as an unexpected and essential gift to Neo. The gift manifests as the highest spiritual sight, the capacity to see directly the nature of the other in Intuition. Now he sees Bane/Smith for who he truly is: a flaming being composed of light – Lucifer himself. Neo can no longer see the physical world with physical eyes – his sight has been wholly transformed. Where through the capacity of Imagination he used to see the green code of the matrix, through the capacity of Intuition he now sees the gold streaming light of all of the machines in their true spiritual form (we will see in a moment just what these machines may represent that they may have such a spiritual form). It is Lucifer's gift that, because transformed by Neo, ultimately works towards Neo's further evolution by allowing him to navigate in the machine city.

On their way, Neo's transformed etheric body allows him to disable the onslaught of machines, and as a symbol of the interpenetration of beings experienced in Intuition, at one point the *spiritual* body of a machine actually sweeps through Neo and almost overwhelms him but for the hand of Trinity, the compassionate guide who grounds Neo to his mission through their feeling connection. Neo and Trinity, to escape the machines, must finally rise up, up, above the dark clouds, where for the first time the sun, the principle of transformation itself, becomes visible – but only to the feeling life, the only aspect which can fully *appreciate* its transformative beauty. It is only after this moment that Trinity is able to die – but not before joining Neo in a last kiss, who actually breathes in her last breath, symbolically joining her essence to his.

But Neo must experience a final transformation – that of his physical body. Just as in the first movie Neo saves and integrates the thinking capacity in Morpheus, and in the second movie saves and integrates the feeling capacity in Trinity, he must save and integrate the willing capacity *in himself*. It is a testament to the deep insights working through these movies that they can represent such a process in the realm of concrete images. For example in the first movie Neo, representative of the will, the thing which does and *is* the transformation, saves Morpheus, representative of thinking, by grasping him with his hand (the will). Morpheus, as the thinking, is located at the top of a building called "Metacortex" – Neo's old workplace. This building itself is like a brain, and Morpheus (who is bald for a reason), at the top, is himself entirely representative of the top of the human body: the head (particularly the frontal

cortex, which is literally the name of the building: ‘beyond the cortex’). We can thus truthfully say that the images tell us that Neo’s will, his hand, saves the capacity of thinking, the head. In *Reloaded*, Neo saves Trinity by putting his hand, again the will, literally around Trinity’s etheric heart – in this sense the images bear out the principle unmistakably. What about the last movie? In *Revolutions*, we find the only possible furtherance of this sequence borne out lawfully in the image of *Smith* using his hand to penetrate Neo’s *heart*. Where in the first two movies, it was still *Neo’s* hand, his will, that did the transformation, the next stage requires the sacrifice of the will itself – thus the only possible choice is the one taken by Neo, which we could esoterically identify in the phrase “Not my will, by thy will, be done.” Smith’s hand had to penetrate Neo’s heart because it is only through the door of divine compassion felt in the heart that Neo is able to sacrifice his will, his self, for not just the rest of humanity, but for Smith as Lucifer as well. It is only through this inner reconciliation at the deepest level of Neo with Smith that Neo can truly transform his physical body. This is why we see Neo, within the matrix, engaged in a monumental battle with a single Smith. It becomes clear that Neo cannot win this contest of wills – Smith is simply stronger. But Neo, again, through a moment of Intuition, offered up now through the working of the Oracle, the Divine Sophia, via Smith/Lucifer, knows what he must do: he must make the ultimate sacrifice of the will: the sacrifice of the self, which *is* will. In this moment, Neo dies not only in the matrix, but in the real world as well – this is a moment of utmost reality, not something that takes place only in the world of illusion. This moment is the ultimate inversion point, where the will is forced to transform itself utterly. Neo sacrifices himself by accepting that he must finally let go of even his own individual life *as individual* in order to deal with Smith/Lucifer. He *knows* that he cannot ever *defeat* Smith/Lucifer – he can only *transform him* through his *own transformation* through death.

But what looks like death to all whose vision is restricted to the physical world is not a normal death – it is a penetration of Neo’s will all the way into and through his physical body, so that his transformed forces can now work from *within* outwards, a reversal only possible through a will made fully conscious. This process manifests as the bursting forth of light from within not only all the Smiths in the matrix, but from within Neo’s *actual* physical body in the real world as well. This light is now cast inexorably upon and within both the spiritual world and the physical world, changing the stage forever.

Esoteric Christianity

Speaking from an understanding of esoteric Christianity, we can see that Neo’s transformations from movie to movie are both an expression of the Christ being’s own process of incarnation as well as acting simultaneously as an expression of the dilemma of these stages as they exist in modern humans today. The Christ being, a being of the Sun (another, more literal meaning to the name *Ander-sun*, the development of the sun inside us), had to experience a process of incarnation, working, as it were, in reverse of the normal process of development seen in an individual human life. In other words, whereas in normal development we see first the development of the physical body (from approximately birth to seven years), then the etheric body (from approximately seven to fourteen), the astral body (from fourteen to twenty-one), and finally of the ego (around age twenty-one), the Christ being had to work backwards, working first as an Ego, incarnated in the man Jesus in his baptism by John, then further inwards through a transformation of the astral, then etheric body (in the transfiguration), and finally into

the physical body itself in the resurrection. Neo's path follows exactly this pattern, waking up as an Ego after being taken through the portal of initiation after taking the red pill, then working in the first movie through a transformation of the astral body and its relation to thinking, the second movie through a transformation of the etheric body and its relation to feeling, and the third movie through a transformation of the physical body and its relation to willing.

In the Luke gospel we are told that Peter, John and James fell asleep as they witnessed the transfiguration of the etheric body carried in the man Jesus by the Christ being. Esoteric Christianity reveals that the Christ being's transfiguration, his penetration deeper into the bodies of the human to the level of the etheric, was an extremely taxing struggle, which had the effect of causing the three disciples to fall asleep, because they could not raise their sight into this spiritual realm directly. This is mirrored in the way that Neo himself *falls asleep* and finds himself actually inside the matrix, on Mobil Ave, an anagram for limbo. Sleep, anthroposophically, is the dissociation of the astral and Ego from the physical and etheric bodies – and while his physical and etheric bodies lie on the table next to Bane, Neo is actually inside the matrix with his astral body and Ego, due to the overwhelming forces involved in the transformation of his etheric body. This has historical roots in old initiation ceremonies, whereby an initiate would undergo a process that would forcibly dissociate one's Ego and astral from one's etheric and physical through events like baptism (in which the initiate was almost drowned), or burial, etc. This allowed the astral and Ego bodies to have an experience of the spiritual world directly, while the priest's function was to know exactly when to bring the initiate back to awakeness, and to help him or her understand the visions and sounds they experienced while in the spiritual world. In the Matrix movies, these spiritual guides take the form of the 'Operators', Tank, Link, and even Cypher. These are guides who span both worlds: the spiritual/inner world and the physical/outer world, and are responsible for creating the proper situation by which the initiates can go into and out of the matrix safely (with a 'call' through a phone), while acting as a guide to help them understand the spiritual images they see while jacked in.

With this understanding we can address the perplexing question of *how* it could be possible for Neo to jack into the matrix without any *physical* connection. Just as Neo gains the ability to feel the Sentinels' spiritual form while in reality, so too Neo can access the matrix directly, through what is his further initiation into the spiritual world via the transformation of the etheric body. It is only with a *transformed* etheric body that a being could possibly enter the matrix directly, without requiring a physical link, because it is the special province of the etheric to hold the physical form together in the absence of the astral and Ego. Were a being with an untransformed etheric body to jack into the matrix directly, the etheric body could not sustain the life processes of the physical body, resulting in death. This is *why* the consequence of simply removing a 'normal' human's 'plug' while jacked into the matrix results in death, as occurs in the first movie with Cypher's betrayal. Within the matrix we see exactly the effect of the etheric body's inability to maintain the life processes when it is not connected lawfully through the astral body to the Ego: not explosions or dramatic effects, but simply the inevitable turning of a living body into a collapsing, dead corpse.

Additionally, the movies eloquently express another, more subtle layer of the process of Christ's descent by including as a background to the present incarnation of the One a series of previous incarnations. Why should there be previous versions of the One? We are told very little about these previous incarnations, their role and function, but we can perhaps indicate a correspondence with

another feature of esoteric Christianity, in which it is recognized that the Christ being actually had to approach humanity multiple times in the past in a particular way, although not ever descending into the physical body as was the case in the river Jordan, in order to provide a balancing influence to the luciferic and ahrimanic tendencies into which humanity could have fallen. Without going into details, it is sufficient to point out that just as the Christ being shows up multiple times in relation to human's cosmic history, first working with the will, then the feeling, and finally the thinking, in order to prepare for the full incarnation of the Christ into a physical body (in the resurrection), so too the One is preceded by other versions which have gone through their own process of development, allowing the world of the matrix and its relationship to humanity to evolve in order to be able to receive version of the One who goes beyond into something entirely *new*, as was the case with Christ's penetration of the physical body itself.

An esoteric Christian perspective also sheds light on another, deeper aspect of Morpheus: his role of John the Baptist to Neo's Christ archetype. This is interesting from the perspective of esoteric Christianity, which recognizes that in the cosmic development of humanity, the way things are today is not how they always were. In particular, human consciousness *now* has certain capacities because of past evolutionary stages taken in context of the whole cosmic situation. With this in mind, when we read the following passage in Matthew: "He [John the Baptist] it is of whom the prophet Isaiah speaks: A voice is heard, calling in the loneliness: 'Prepare the way for the highest leader, make his path straight and good!'" we can discern that there is something special about this being, John the Baptist. He is special in that, in the evolution of human consciousness, there was a time when it first became possible for the Ego of the human being to really awaken within the physical body, to feel itself, as it were, to be fully one with the physical body, and this is essentially what John the Baptist was experiencing: he was awake, and with his awakesness, could see the approaching Christ being, whose arrival now into the man Jesus corresponded with the awakening of humanity to its Ego. This experience of John is precisely one of calling out in the loneliness, for he was alone as the first being to have this particular experience. It is specifically John who can fully recognize and express the sentiment: "After me comes one who is mightier than I." Esoterically, this is what is at work in John's baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan – only a being whose Ego experience had fully entered into relationship with the physical body could witness the descending of the Ego of the Christ being into the man Jesus. So too, Morpheus is the most awakened figure, who is first able to recognize and point to the re-appearance of the One⁷. He knows that one will come after him who is greater, and thus takes the job of paving the way for Neo's work. Morpheus must continually go to bat for him, defending him from the ahrimanic tendency to strategic, physicalistic war in the figure of Locke (after the empiricist John Locke).

These insights, offered by spiritual science, help us to see how what may appear to be simply a fascinating Hollywood movie may in fact be rooted in deep spiritual realities accessible to our own thinking, feeling, and willing, if only we ourselves take up the transformative path. But we can yet go still further.

⁷ This does not include the Oracle, who of course knows Neo's potential identity before anyone else, but this will be explained later.

Agent Smith

Let us examine this being, already identified as symbolic of Lucifer, by first addressing the multiple meanings of his name. A smith is one who makes or works something specified, as in a wordsmith or metalsmith – it signifies the power to act. As an agent, Smith is also the representative of the government in the form of a spy. He is empowered to act for and represent another – in this case the Architect, whom we will later meet as the manifestation of Ahriman. In cyberspace (real-life cyberspace), and in life, an agent is a program or person that gathers information or performs some other services on behalf of another. Medically, an agent is a drug or chemical capable of eliciting a biological response, or an organism that is the cause of a disease vector – i.e. a virus, which Smith becomes in regards to the matrix itself. Smith is also a name used to signify “everyman”, a meaning which literally becomes true at the end of Revolutions. All of these meanings are appropriate for Agent Smith in his spiritual context.

Smith is the prime parallel to Neo, and as such follows a *polar* path of development, which is not *with*, but *against* the progressive stream of evolution. Thus, Smith, like Neo, goes through a series of transformations with respect to his thinking, feeling, and willing, but in the *opposite* direction, away from wisdom.

At the beginning of the first Matrix movie, Smith is actually Agent Smith, and like the other agents is an agent of the Architect’s system, a thinking program, designed for control, a border piece in the puzzle of the matrix. Yet unlike the other agents, Smith is *unsatisfied*. This dissatisfaction is precisely what can live in an astral body unbalanced through luciferic tendencies, and is what triggers the whole drama in the first place. We see Smith’s dissatisfaction in his encounter with a chained Morpheus, and in his monologue we see that it is in some way because of a *sensation* (which lives in the astral body, where Lucifer resides in us). As Smith intones: “It’s the *smell!*” This can be understood in relationship to the idea that the frontal lobe of the brain, the seat of higher consciousness and in particular of the capacity for self-reflection, is in a certain way an overdeveloped sense of smell, as it is phylogenetically related to the nerves responsible for the sensation of smell, upon which it sits. In other words, we can see that this is a picture of the overdevelopment of Smith’s own Ego, which is carried out in an unlawful way, leading towards self-inflation (the literal process of which – the in-breath – is required for smelling).

Smith, because of this fundamental orientation, wants to escape the matrix (like Neo does, for himself and on behalf of all humans), but he doesn’t know how to do so. He in fact wants to be free, and his astral *desire* for freedom is what ignites the whole situation in the Matrix that results in the *actual* freeing of Neo and ultimately the rest of humanity. Smith thus inadvertently furthers the destiny of Neo through his interactions with him by giving Neo something to resist even while trying to corrupt him. Thus Neo’s own Ego is called upon to develop beyond the strictures upheld by Smith and the other agents. Yet through this, and specifically in his fighting with Neo, Smith *also* is changed. In his monologue to Morpheus, he does something subtle but extremely significant in the act of removing his earpiece, which is symbolic of Smith’s connection and subservience to the rest of the matrix and the control it represents. This act is a sort of defiance signifying “I too am free”, and is the point of no return for Agent Smith.

This seminal moment of Agent Smith *thinking* for *himself* is representative of the esoteric aspect of the “fall” of Lucifer, which relates that Lucifer, an angel, took upon himself the ability to hold an

inner state that was not also manifested outwardly: i.e. he could *lie*. The transformation of thinking then is here one in which Smith can have his own agenda, not that of the other agents or the Architect, for whom they all supposedly work – why? Because Smith wants to be *free*, and it is precisely this capacity to be free that is a fall from the normal nature of an angel, which is to either speak and thus manifest the will and messages of god (the outward movement), or to not speak and to look inward and see only higher realities – but not to be separated from them (the inward movement), i.e. normally angels cannot lie, which is a capacity experienced only by those angels who followed Lucifer. In other words, *for an angel*, a lie is the ability to hold one’s inner state apart from the divine movement, and to do so without outward manifestation.

Smith, who yearns to be free, is actually *given* the potential to be free as a consequence of Neo’s own transformation of his astral body at the end of the first movie. Agent Smith becomes simply Smith – no longer an agent of the system – for the duration of the second movie. Interestingly, Neo’s very first act after his resurrection is to essentially dive *into* Agent Smith, literally destroying him while simultaneously transforming him from the inside out through his new-found power as the One.

From an anthroposophical perspective, the beings who work against the progression of human evolution, such as the luciferic and ahrimanic beings, are not evil in any normal sense, but are very high beings who have themselves been *held back* in their own evolution, and the evolution of humanity is intimately bound up with what could be called their redemption. In other words, the progressive evolution of humanity is simultaneously a re-inclusion of these beings into the progressive stream. What is presented to us in the Matrix trilogy is simultaneously a picture of the redemption of the beings closest to us in this respect, the luciferic beings, as well as a picture of the dangers encountered by these beings if they refuse this path.

Thus, at the end of the first movie, Agent Smith, as Lucifer, is redeemed in a *de facto* sense by the transformation of Neo into the One, and thus becomes Smith. Yet the freedom thus gained is ultimately of an entirely different sort than Neo’s, because Smith does not *understand* it through a lawful process of ego transformation as does Neo, but rather grasps it only through the desire of his astral body.

In Reloaded, Smith has no idea what he is, or what he is supposed to do, but he does know that he is changed, unplugged, and is free from the Matrix (but not yet from himself, because his ego is not yet free, only his astral body). As soon as his freedom is apparent, he then exemplifies the Luciferic qualities run amok: self inflation to the n^{th} degree – copies upon copies of himself, as expressed in his phrase “Me, me, me, me, me...” Smith discovers his Luciferic gift: to take over the astral bodies of other programs and humans who are in the matrix by overpowering them with his own identity (remembering that anthroposophically-speaking Lucifer’s power is active in the astral body). Interestingly, this process of replication is accomplished by a hand jab to the heart: the luciferic power of will (hand) taking over the feeling life (heart), and finally the thinking as well. This is accompanied by a sort of liquid mirror coating that spreads outward from the heart – when it reaches the thinking of the head the transformation is complete. This mirror gesture is archetypally luciferic: all I wish to see is myself everywhere. It is archetypal projection, and an image of the drama given to us by Lucifer. But this particular mirror is a liquid coating, an overlay on the skin only (not the soul), and it only reflects one being, regardless of who is looking: Smith. Thus ultimately there is really only one Smith – the copies are all parasitic illusions that spring from the unchecked luciferic astral impulse to self-inflate.

This is borne out in the third movie when Smith confronts Neo *singly*, in a one-on-one encounter, while all the other Smiths stand by to bear witness – the ultimate expression of self-aggrandizement: the whole universe is myself basking in my own power – i.e. I am GOD.

Smith's freedom comes (again, in a de facto way) with great power – the power to self-inflate, as he is no longer bound by the restrictions of a reality laid upon him from the outside. At this point in his evolution, Smith represents the luciferic danger of entering the spiritual world before we are ready – we do not understand the spiritual world or its laws, which at first seem radically different than those of normal life, and thus fall prey to the first problem: astral expansion, self-inflation. Thus, when we enter the spiritual world without having, in a sense, *earned* the capacity through our own Ego transformation (as may be the case in taking certain substances, for example), we find ourselves in the spiritual world but have no capacity to distinguish between what is essentially an experience of my own Self and an objective experience of what lies objectively beyond me. Smith himself falls prey to this error because he does not understand his purpose, and his Ego, not having taken up the process of transformation, is not rightfully connected to his astral body. With his unintegrated freedom he thus expresses an archetypally luciferic response out of his untransformed astral feelings: rage and revenge. This is the lower parallel to Neo's transformation of his etheric body, his feeling life. Smith can only respond with essentially mindless rage. This capacity for rage is a luciferic capacity, expressed archetypally in the *feeling* that "I will annihilate you." The Ego of Smith is inflating so as to seem to himself invincible, although the middle path of Neo somehow always catches him off guard, because it is precisely this middle-way that is invisible to Lucifer, who is one-sided when following the lower path.

Thus Smith wants to take from Neo what Neo took from Smith: his *life* – almost with no purpose other than to make the statement such as '*I can* destroy you if I want to, and I *do* want to!' Smith responds in this way because the work of transformation was done by Neo, not by Smith. Even though Neo's deed actually resulted in freeing Smith from the matrix, this freedom is not complete without understanding, which requires that Smith transform *himself*, with the *help* of Neo.

Events then take a turn that in the movies may appear to be 'chance', but which can, with an understanding of the deeper spiritual currents at work, be seen as the next stage of development towards his further evolution as a luciferic being and as a lower parallel to Neo. After copying himself onto the mind of a free human who had jacked into the matrix, he picks up the phone, the 'hardline' that joins the mind back to the body, and follows it backwards into the physical body of Bane. Just as at the end of Reloaded Neo gains the capacity, through the transformation of his etheric body, of dealing with the machines in *reality*, so too Smith now has a real human body (which he so despised earlier) to utilize as his own. He is fascinated by its *physicality*, by the fact that it is *real*, but ostensibly *not* with its transformation, just as he was not interested in the transformation of the thinking in the first movie or the feeling life in the second. Therefore we see Bane cutting himself repeatedly just to drown in the *sensation* of it.

Meanwhile, inside the matrix, Smith becomes single-minded with willful purpose: to take over via the unlawful process of projection the entire matrix, and then to meet with Neo in one-on-one combat – a test of wills from Smith's perspective. But this is precisely his downfall, because from the lower path it looks like a *contest* of wills, which manifests as a physical battle, and in this sense Smith is quite clearly superior (as a higher being should be!) – but from a higher path, this contest of 'whose Ego has a more powerful will' is transformed into 'whose will can be sacrificed consciously for the

progression of all’. Thus Smith is blinded by the overdeveloped will which is brutish, irrepressible, and totally living in the dark because of the initial steps taken onto the lower path symbolized in Smith’s removal of his earpiece in the first movie. We can see a wonderful image of this when Smith as Bane confronts Neo in Revolutions, after having burned out Neo’s eyes. What we see is the fiery countenance of the fallen angel, flaming everywhere *except* behind the curiously present sunglasses, which remain entirely *dark*. Smith’s true inner nature is still in the dark, and remains so until the very end of Reloaded, when finally Smith’s absorption of Neo results in Smith’s transformation which in fact shows up symbolically as divine light streaming out of Smith’s previously darkened eyes, which breaks through the shades of his sunglasses – devices designed to specifically keep away Trinity’s internalized experience of the sun as a representative of the transformative power of the Christ being.

In this way we can see that the character of Smith can really be understood as a manifestation of the regressive process taken up by the luciferic beings, and as a threefold warning to developing humans who encounter these beings in their own process of the transformation of their thinking, feeling, and willing. Smith fails to *understand his freedom* in the first movie, fails to *manifest compassion* in the second, and fails to *embody the will* of his Ego in a lawful way in the third. We can summarize all the major elements so far discussed in the form of the following chart:

	Realm:	Capacity:	Developed Capacity:	Christ/ Humanity as:	Lucifer as:	Christ/Neo Incarnation process:	Outward task:	Image:
The Matrix:	Astral	Thinking	Imagination	Thomas A. Anderson	Agent Smith	Transformation of astral body: seeing code	Neo saves Morpheus (thinking)	Neo's hand to Morpheus as 'head'
Reloaded:	Etheric	Feeling	Inspiration	The One	Smith	Transformation of etheric body: stopping sentinels	Neo saves Trinity (feeling)	Neo's hand to Trinity as/actual heart
Revolutions:	Physical	Willing	Intuition	Neo	Smith/Bane	Transformation of physical body: becoming light	Neo saves himself (willing)	SMITH's hand (hand of the other) to Neo's heart

Yet even beyond Smith as symbolic of Lucifer and Neo as symbolic of the path of Christ, we have still another extremely important figure to contend with: the Architect. What insights can a spiritual scientific perspective bring to this figure?

STAY TUNED for explorations of the following:

Who is the Architect?

What exactly *is* the Matrix?

Who is the Oracle?

Who is that floating baby-face at the end of Revolutions?

What is the deal with the Merovingian and Persephone?

What is the significance of Sati?

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