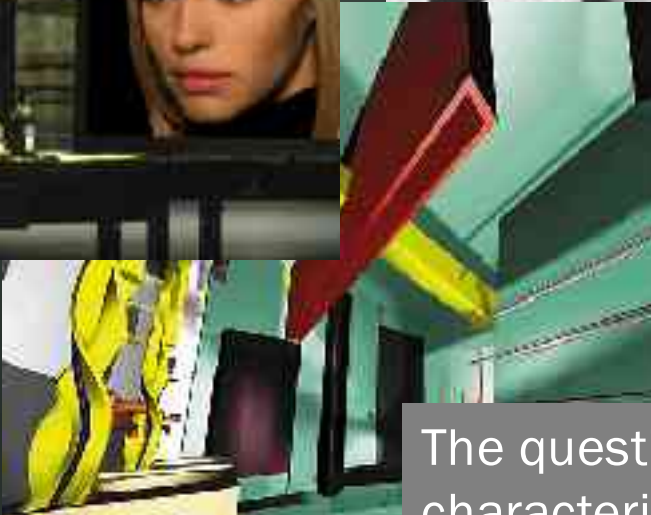
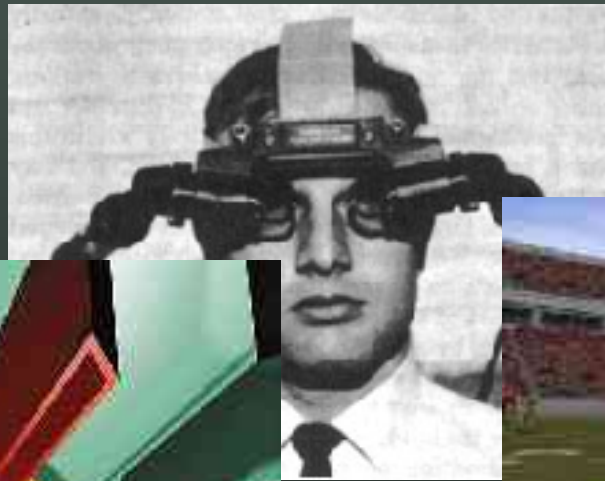


# The Virtual Dialectic:

Rethinking *The Matrix* and its Significance

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The question is whether the essential characteristics of virtual reality as a reality in which the frustrations and disappointments of the actual world do not exist, will inevitably lead to a diminishing desire to live in the actual world. So, instead of learning the disciplines of living with or changing one's individual or communal environment, one finds it easier to escape into a reality where these practicalities do not exist (Peter Horsfield)

**CESifo** Working Papers

VIRTUAL WORLDS: A FIRST-HAND  
ACCOUNT OF MARKET AND  
SOCIETY ON THE CYBERIAN  
FRONTIER

Tilman C. Schmidt

CESifo Working Paper No. 618

December 2001

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gathered data in Nevada from 2000  
and data collected by the author from  
his private computer case. CESifo  
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this report. The author is a member  
of the Center for Economic Studies  
of the University of Munich.



## Exchange Rate

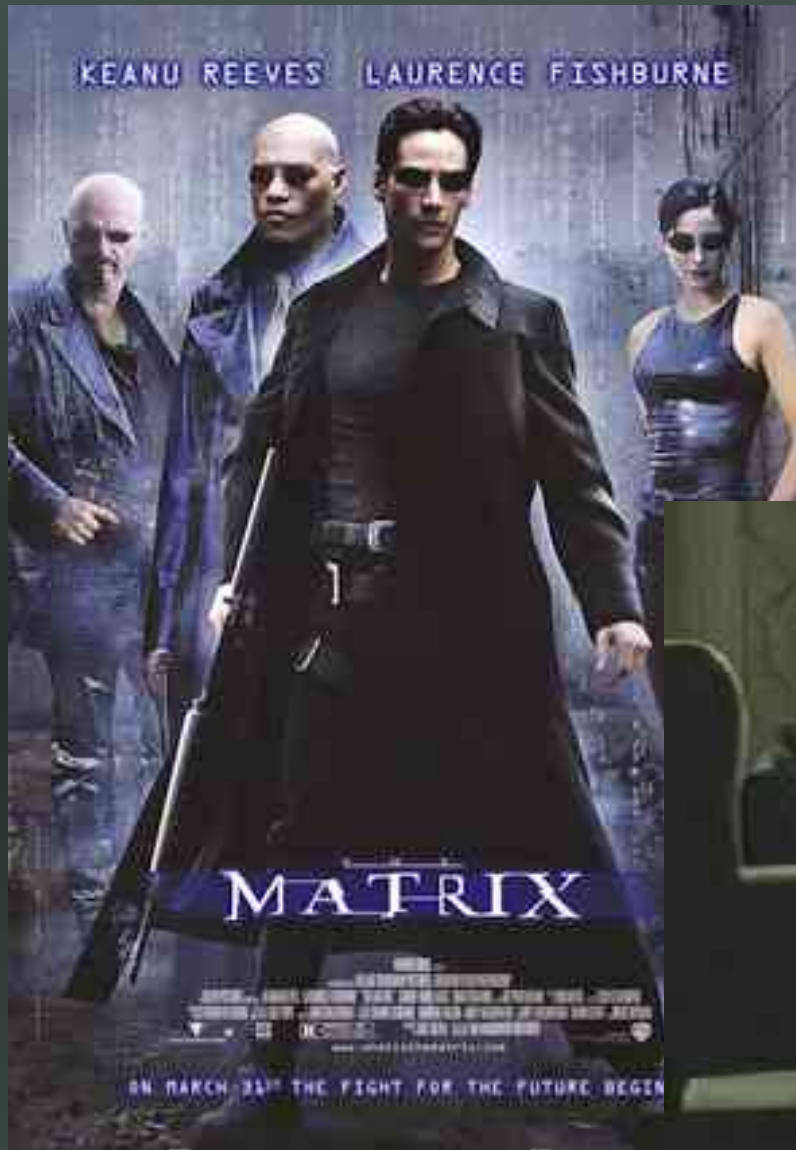
1 Platinum Piece = \$ 0.01072; better  
exchange rate than the Yen or Lira

## Gross National Product

\$135 million or \$2,266 per capita  
*EverQuest* is the 77<sup>th</sup> richest country  
in the world

## Hourly Wage

Average avatar makes 319 PP per  
hour or \$3.42/hour (assuming an  
exchange rate of 0.01072 PP per  
dollar).

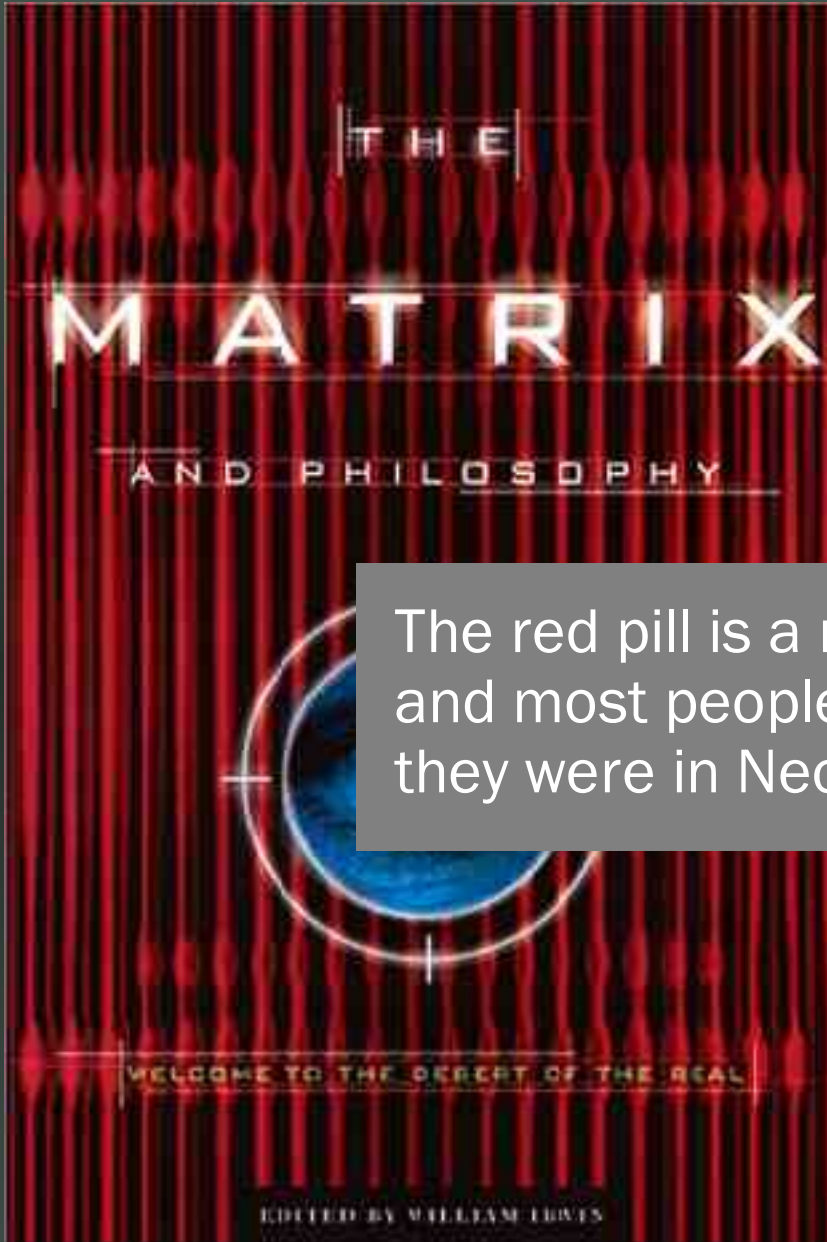




The two the pills that are cradled in Morpheus's hands constitute the material in which all forms of information technology have been understood, developed, and evaluated.

1





2

The red pill is a new symbol of bold choice, and most people insist they would take it if they were in Neo's shoes.



3

Question the logical structure and ethical repercussions of the binary opposition that is presented in the red and blue pills. Interested in that choice whereby one decides to choose between red and blue or rules them out.



# Taking the Red Pill

The Matrix is, at its core, a film with a moral plot

(Iakovos Vasiliou, 2002, p. 1).









True  
Being  
Authenticity  
Real

False  
Appearance  
Inauthenticity  
Illusion



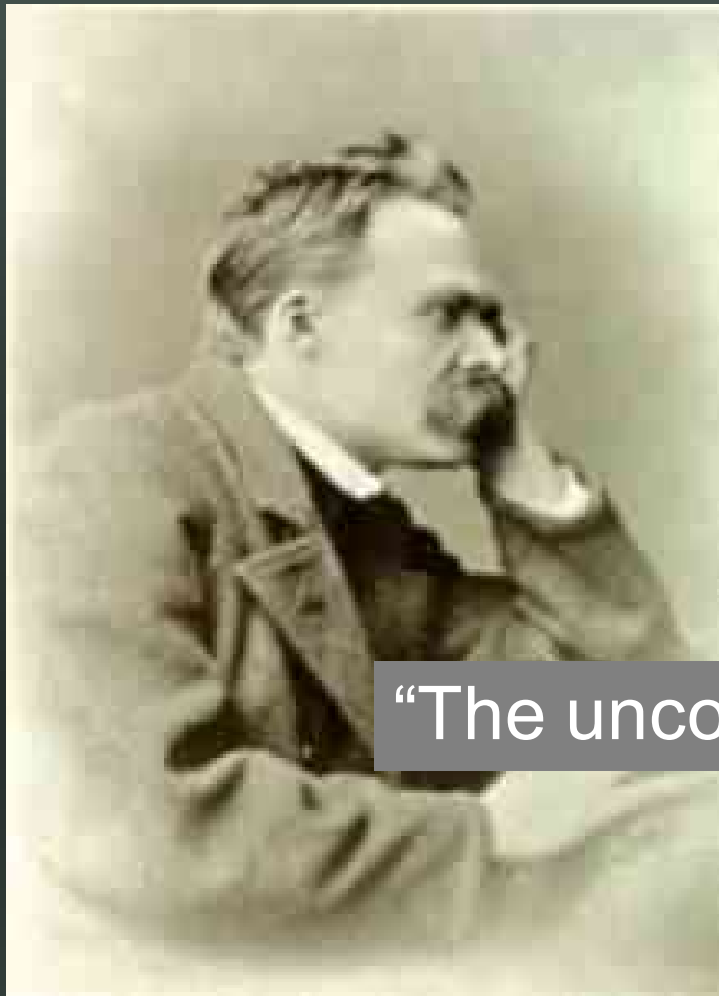
What do you suppose his answer would be if someone told him that what he had seen before was all a cheat and an illusion, but that now, being nearer to reality and turned toward real things, he saw more truly?

Π  
[II] ΠΕΡ  
ΤΑ ΤΟΥ  
ΚΡΑΤΗΣ, ΓΛΑΥΚΩΝ  
ΑΔ.

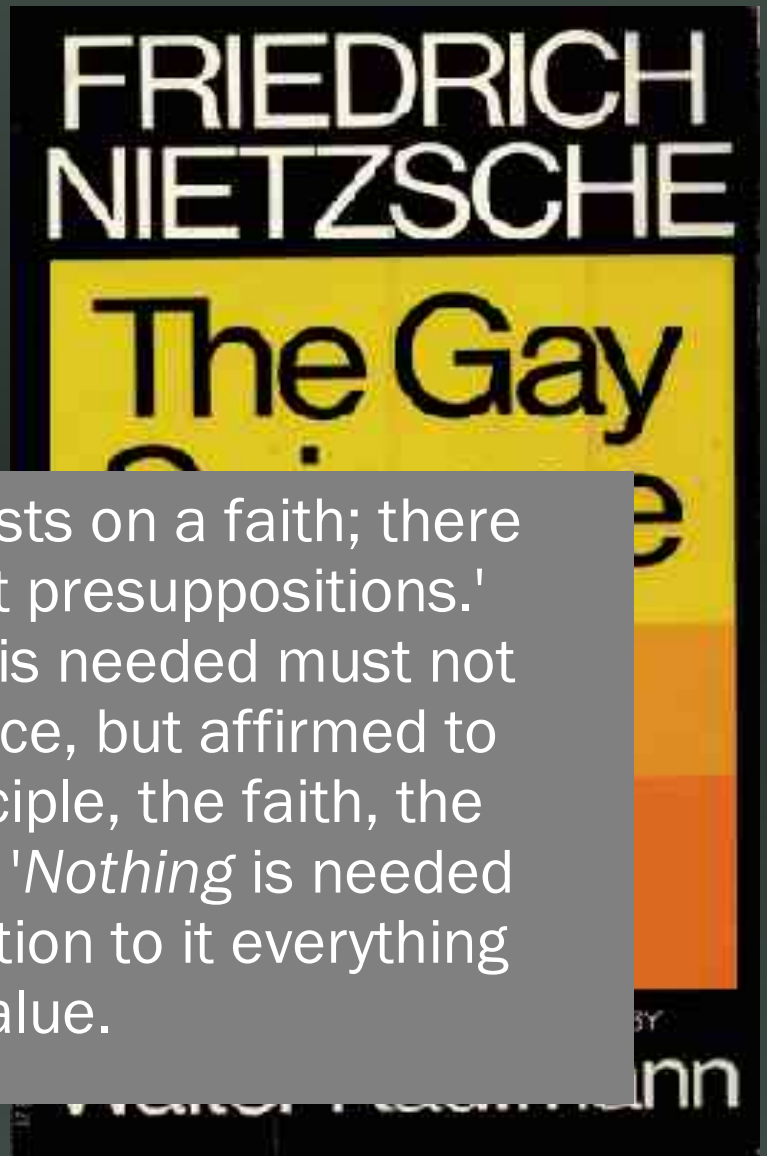
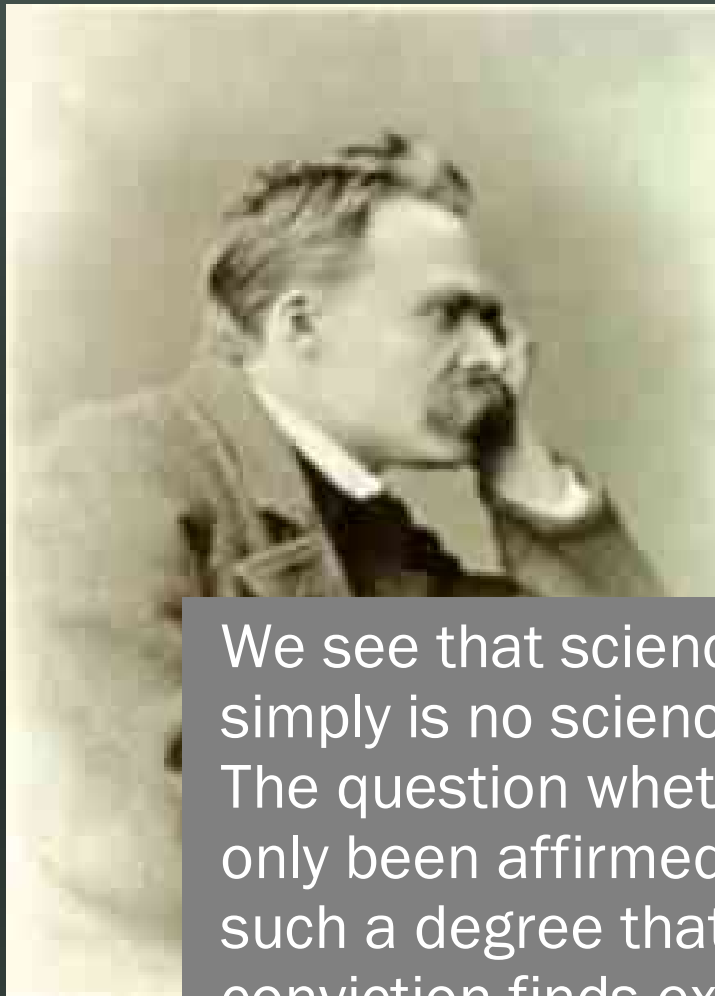
Κατέβην χθ  
Αριστοῦ, προσκυβόμενος τε τῇ θεῷ καὶ ἀμ  
ορτὴν βουλόμενοι θεῖσσι θάλατταν ποιή  
ν, ὅτι νῦν πρῶτον ἄγνοτες, καλὴ μὲν εὖν μο  
τὸν ἐπιχρῶσιν πομπῇ ἔδοξεν εἶναι, οὐ μέντοι  
ἐφάνητο ἀρέσκει ἦν οἱ Θεοῖσιν ἔπεμπον.  
σοκυβόμενα δὲ καὶ θεομνηστῆρες ἀπῆμεν  
τὸ ἄστυ, κατέβην εὖν πύραυλοι γυῖας  
ε ὀρινημίσι

“Yes,” he said, “I think that he would choose to endure anything rather than such a life.” (516e)

...the title and ...  
Socrates narrates  
and *Iyis*; see also  
Demetrius, *On Style*,  
of “trimeter” words  
anecdote that it was  
variations. For Plat  
*Phaedr.* 278 D, *Ch.*  
\* Cf. 409 c, about  
\* Plato and Xenophon represent Socrates as worshipping  
the gods, *Phaedr.* 278d, *Ataraxias, Contra gentes, v.*, censures  
2

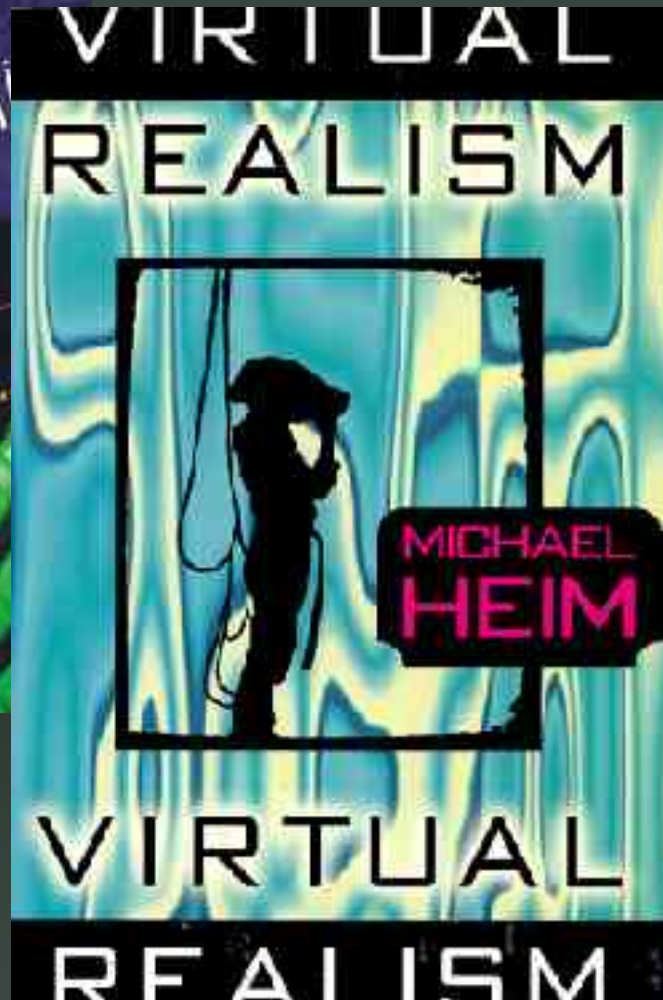


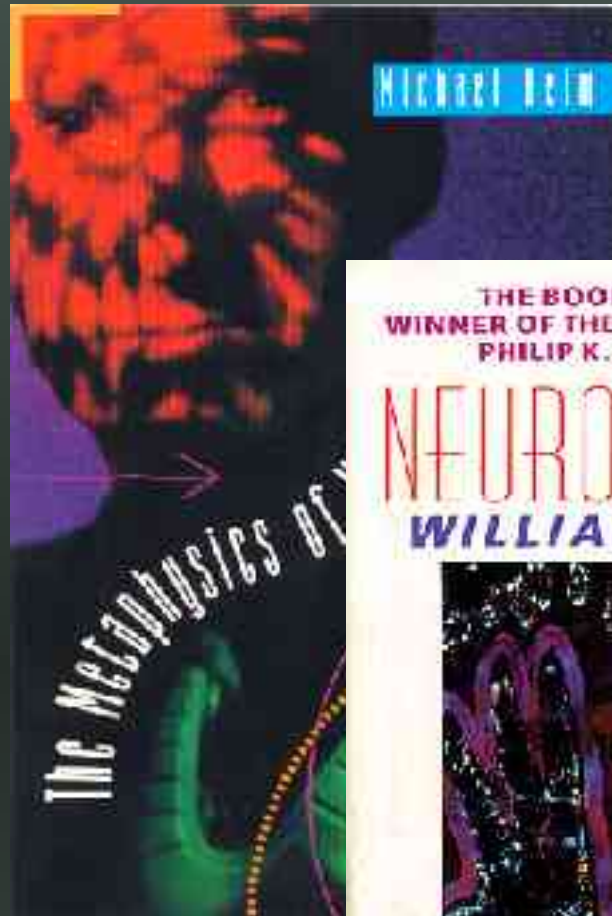
“The unconditional will to truth”



We see that science also rests on a faith; there simply is no science 'without presuppositions.' The question whether *truth* is needed must not only been affirmed in advance, but affirmed to such a degree that the principle, the faith, the conviction finds expression: '*Nothing* is needed *more* than truth, and in relation to it everything else has only second-rate value.'







THE BOOK OF THE YEAR!  
WINNER OF THE HUGO, NEBULA AND  
PHILIP K. DICK AWARDS!

# NEUROMANCER

WILLIAM GIBSON



"A FASCINATING, FUTURE-SEEKING, AND  
WELL-WORTH READING PERFORMANCE... ONE OF THE BEST."  
—WASHINGTON POST

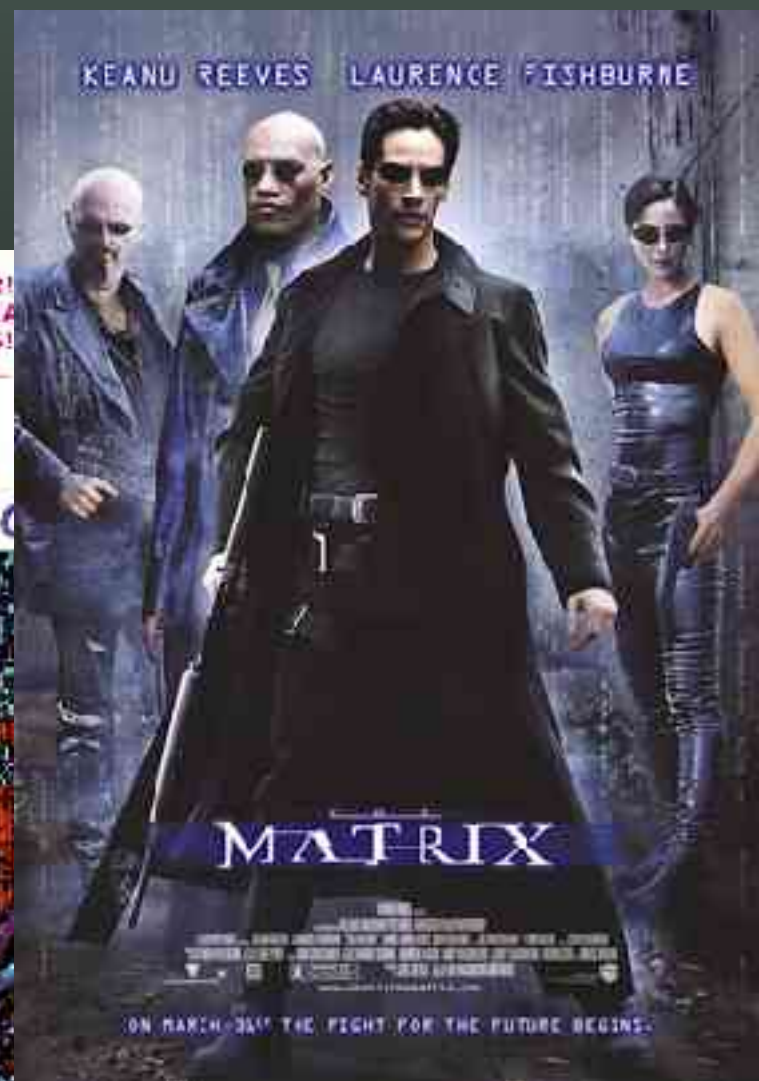
THE BOOK OF THE YEAR!  
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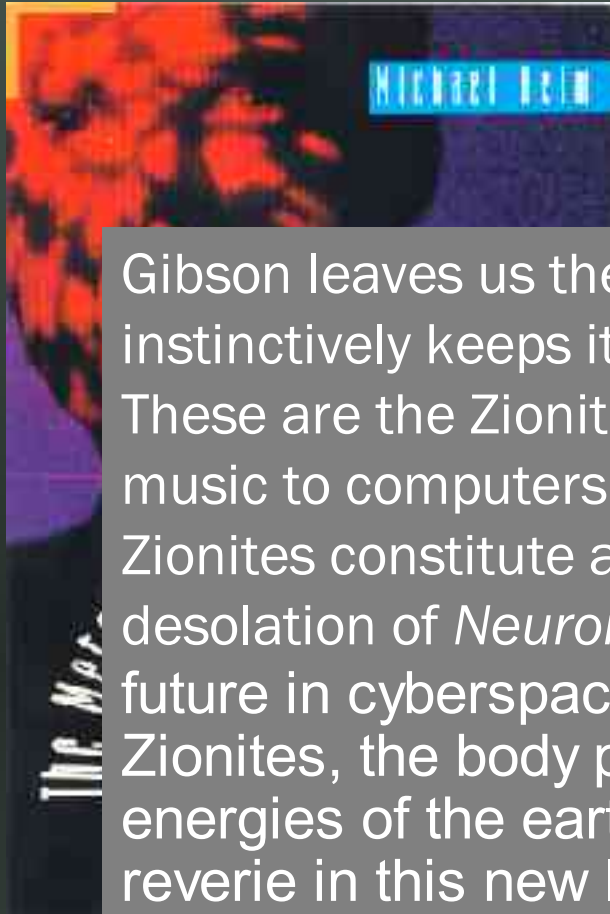
"A FASCINATING, FORTHRIGHT, AND UNUSUAL...  
A MASTERFUL PERFORMANCE... STYLISH OF THE ART."  
- WASHINGTON POST



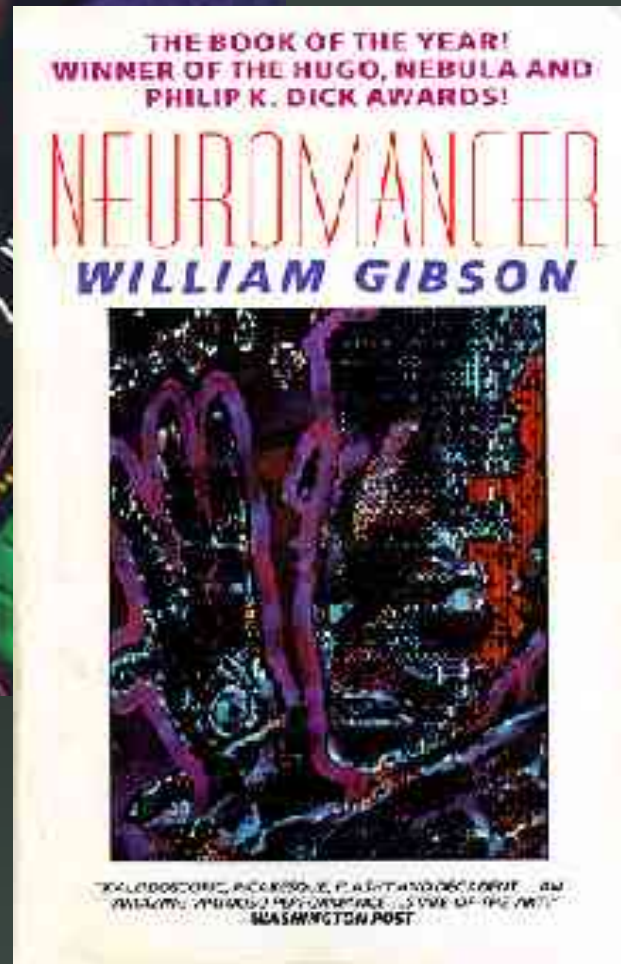
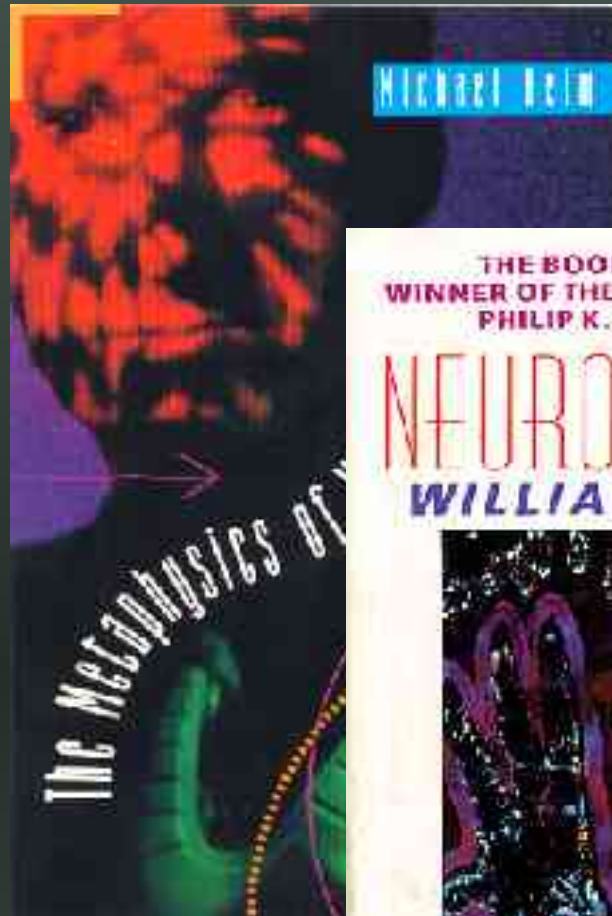
KEANU REEVES LAURENCE FISHBURNE

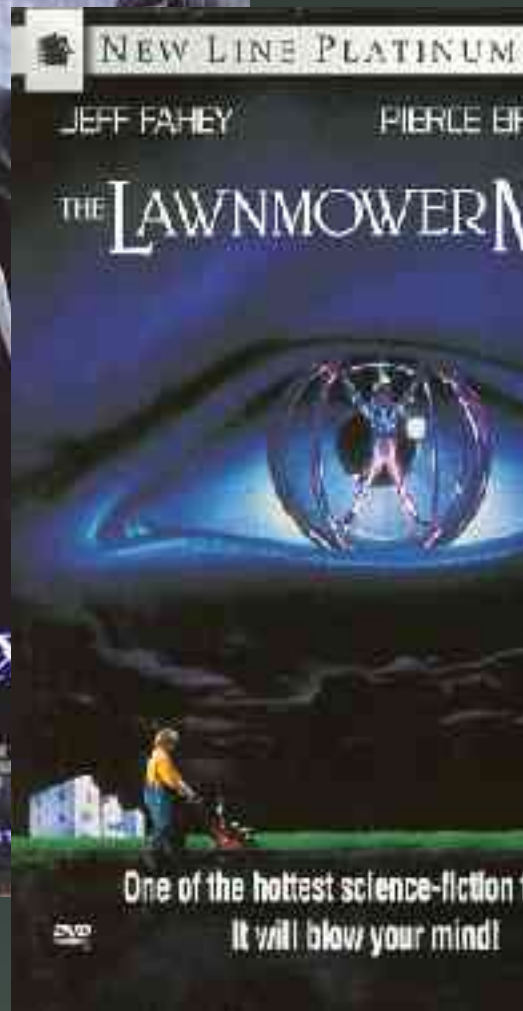
# MATRIX

ON MARCH 31ST THE FIGHT FOR THE FUTURE BEGINS.



Gibson leaves us the image of a human group that instinctively keeps its distance from the computer matrix. These are the Zionites, the religiously tribal folk who prefer music to computers and intuitive loyalties to calculation. The Zionites constitute a human remnant in the environmental desolation of *Neuromancer*.. As we suit up for the exciting future in cyberspace, we must not lose touch with the Zionites, the body people who remain rooted in the energies of the earth. They will nudge us out of our heady reverie in this new layer of reality. They will remind us of the living genesis of cyberspace, of the heartbeat behind the laboratory, of the love that still sprouts amid the broken slag and the rusty shells of oil refineries "under the poisoned silver sky.

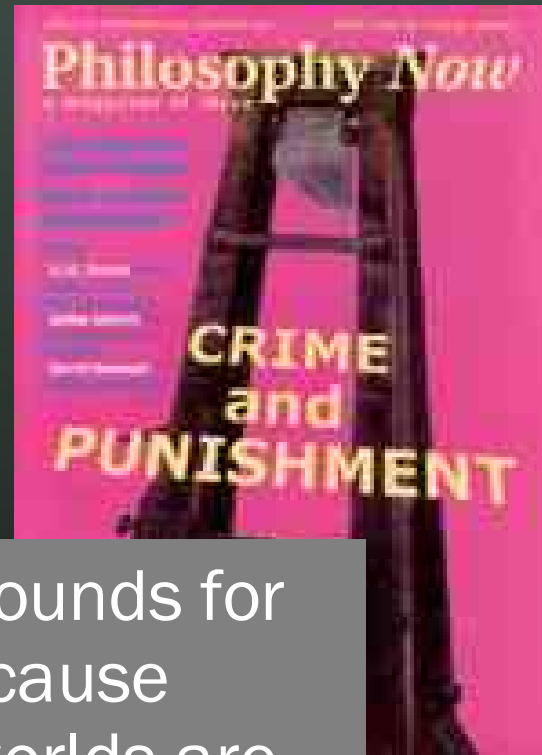




# The Blue Pill and Beyond

It is less a matter of being pro- or anti-technology, but of developing a critical perspective on the ethics of virtuality.

(Kroker & Weinstein, 1994, p. 5)



There are no rational grounds for making the decision because epistemologically, the worlds are the same.



## Russell Blackford

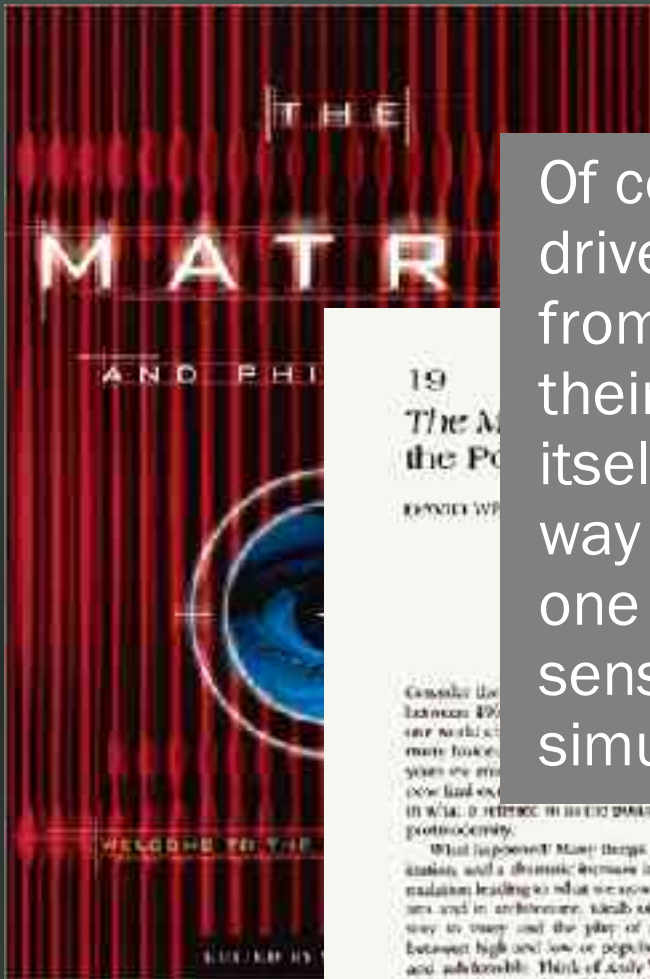
“Try the *Blue Pill*: What’s Wrong with Life in a Simulation”

What happens if we reshuffle the deck. What if the machines had fed their human batteries a nice organically grown algae broth or what if, instead of rejecting the virtual paradise that the machines originally provided them, the humans had accepted it and flourished? What if they had consciously agreed to live their lives in the simulated reality of the matrix? Morpheus's moral crusade to wake everyone up would be at least slightly compromised, no?









Of course the whole plot of the film is driven by the noble battle for liberation from the tyranny of the machines and their evil Matrix. But the film, despite itself, presents us with two worlds in a way that shows us that Cypher is the one who is right. I believe that the only sensible path is to choose the simulated world over the real one.

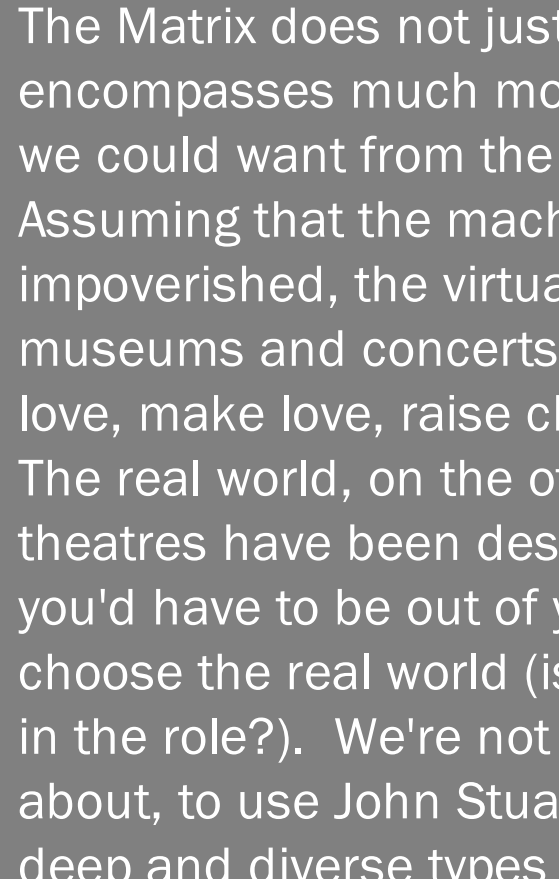
## 19 *The Matrix* the Philosophy

RONNIE W...

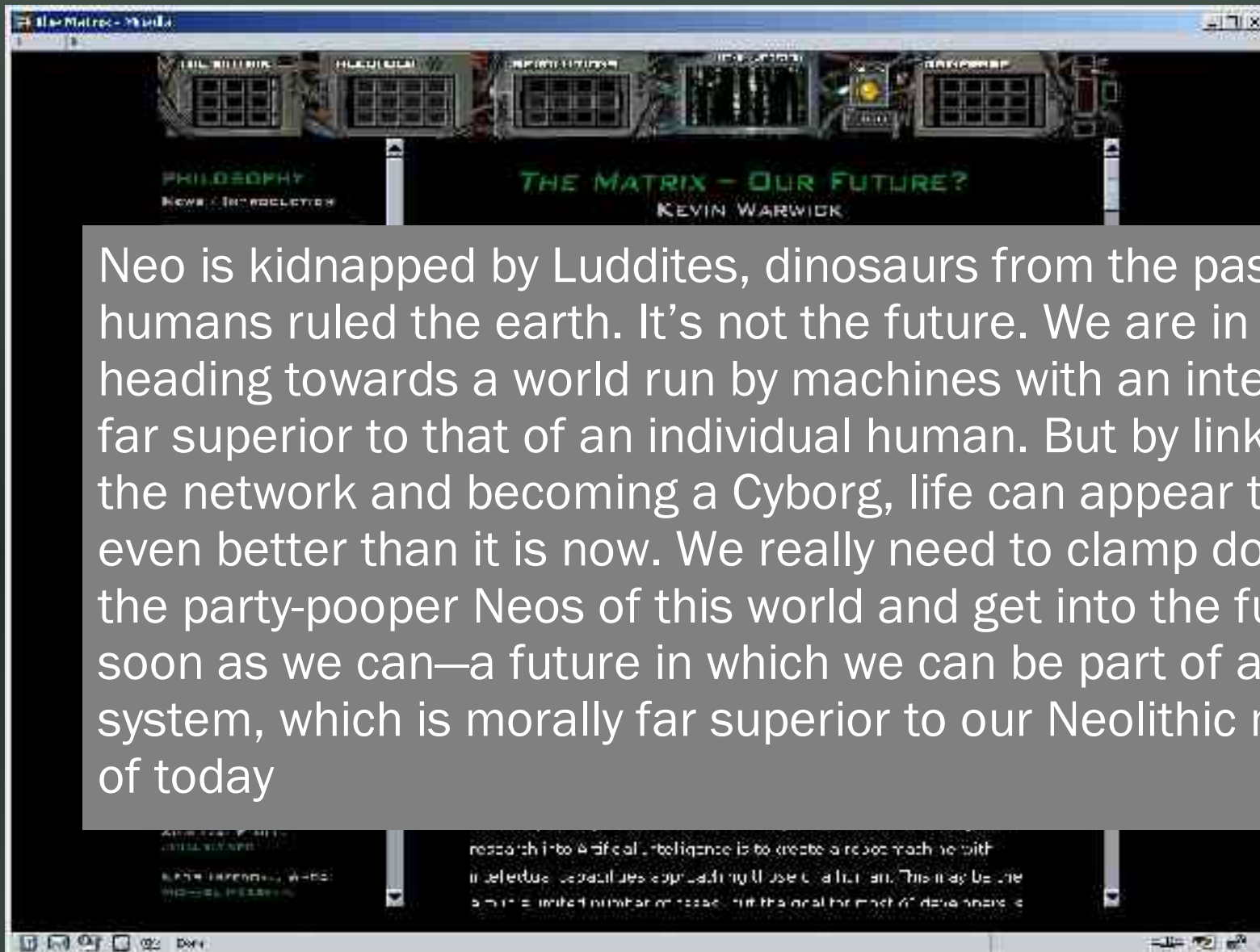
Consider the  
technique of  
our world:  
more books,  
years in the  
00s had on  
in which a  
history in the  
embodiment of  
the machine: a  
post-society.

What happens? More things, more things, more things, more things, and a dramatic increase in the flexibility of capital accumulation leading to what we now know as globalization.<sup>2</sup> In the art and in architecture, tabs of space and depth have given way to easy and the play of surfaces while the distinction between high and low or popular art has come to seem spurious and indefensible. Think of *Andy Warhol* or *Nude Descending a Staircase*; many have been led to abandon their faith in art's...

<sup>2</sup>The idea of "globalization" is well to the extent that the creation of "globalization" arose out of the fact that in the subject, 1994, Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1991) Harvey's book also explains a more, which also for the "condition of postmodernity" (p. 11-12). Harvey quotes Karl Marx as saying that capitalism would not be abolished until it had gone on for 100 years (1994, p. 11-12). In fact, Marx's work with the founding of the modernist knowledge society...



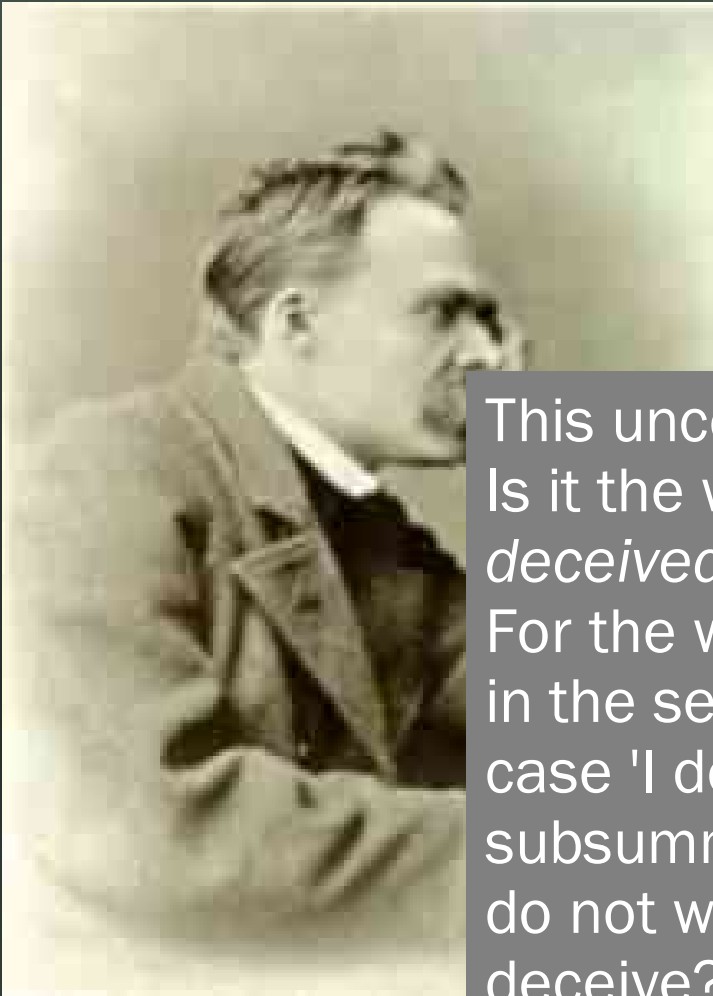
The Matrix does not just offer sensual pleasures. It really encompasses much more, in fact, it gives us just about everything we could want from the shallowest to the deepest gratifications. Assuming that the machines haven't made things unnecessarily impoverished, the virtual world gives us the opportunity to visit museums and concerts, read Shakespeare and Stephen King, fall in love, make love, raise children, form deep friendships, and so on.... The real world, on the other hand, is a wasteland. The libraries and theatres have been destroyed and the skies are always gray. In fact, you'd have to be out of your mind or at least seriously out to lunch to choose the real world (is that why Keanu Reeves seems so well cast in the role?). We're not talking base hedonism now, we're talking about, to use John Stuart Mill's words, "the higher faculties" and the deep and diverse types of gratifications derived from them. Such gratification is to be found more easily in the Matrix than in the 'desert of the real.'



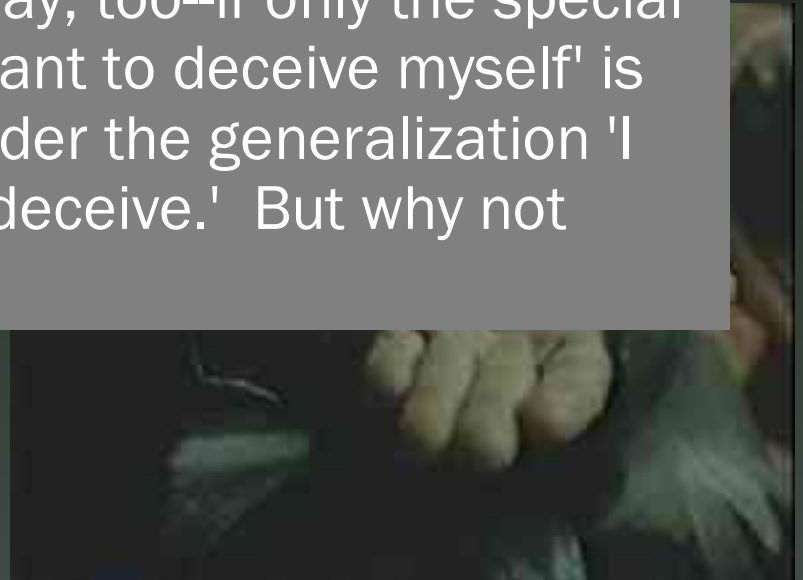
Neo is kidnapped by Luddites, dinosaurs from the past when humans ruled the earth. It's not the future. We are in reality heading towards a world run by machines with an intelligence far superior to that of an individual human. But by linking into the network and becoming a Cyborg, life can appear to be even better than it is now. We really need to clamp down on the party-pooper Neos of this world and get into the future as soon as we can—a future in which we can be part of a Matrix system, which is morally far superior to our Neolithic morals of today

[http://whatisthematrix.warnerbros.com/rl\\_cmp/phi.html](http://whatisthematrix.warnerbros.com/rl_cmp/phi.html)

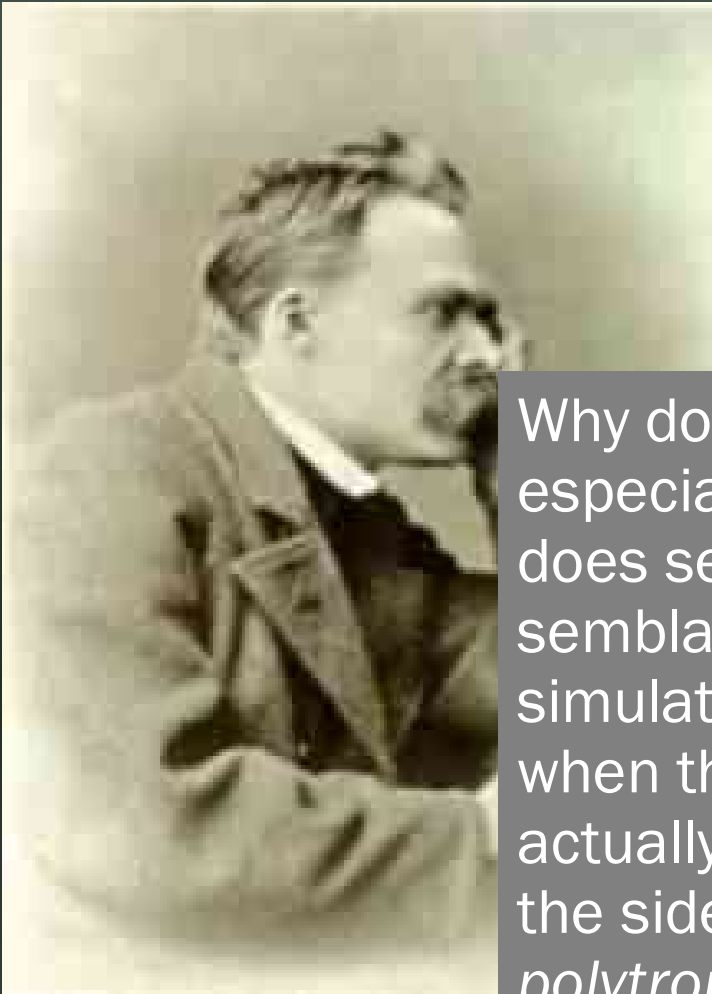




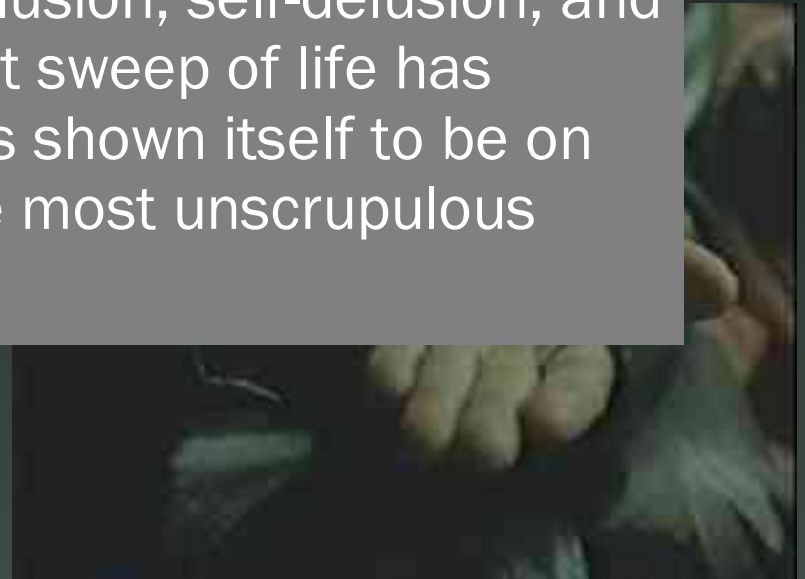
This unconditional will to truth--what is it? Is it the will *not to allow oneself to be deceived?* Or is it the will *not to deceive?* For the will to truth could be interpreted in the second way, too--if only the special case 'I do not want to deceive myself' is subsummed under the generalization 'I do not want to deceive.' But why not deceive?





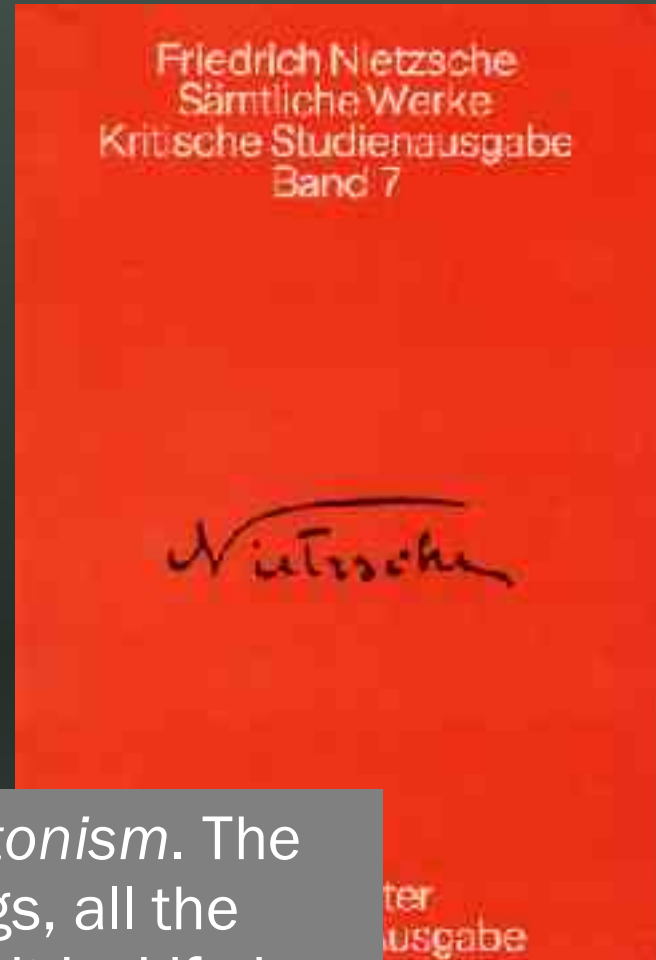


Why do you not want to deceive especially if it should seem--and it does seem!--as if all of life aimed at semblance, meaning error, deception, simulation, delusion, self-delusion, and when the great sweep of life has actually always shown itself to be on the side of the most unscrupulous *polytropoi*.



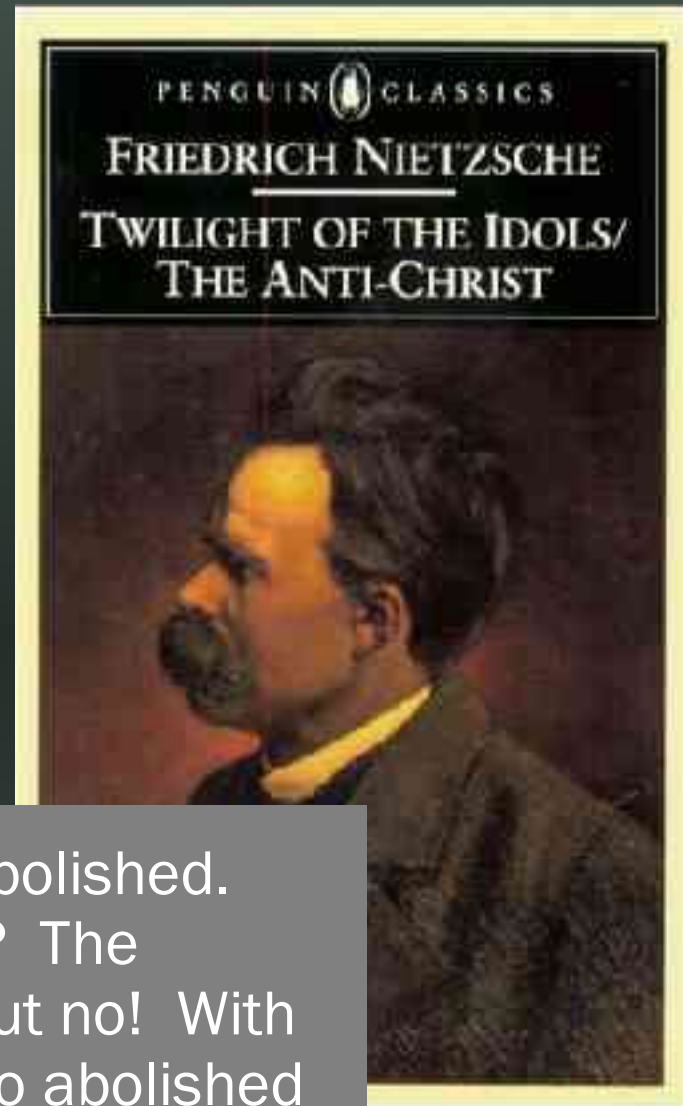




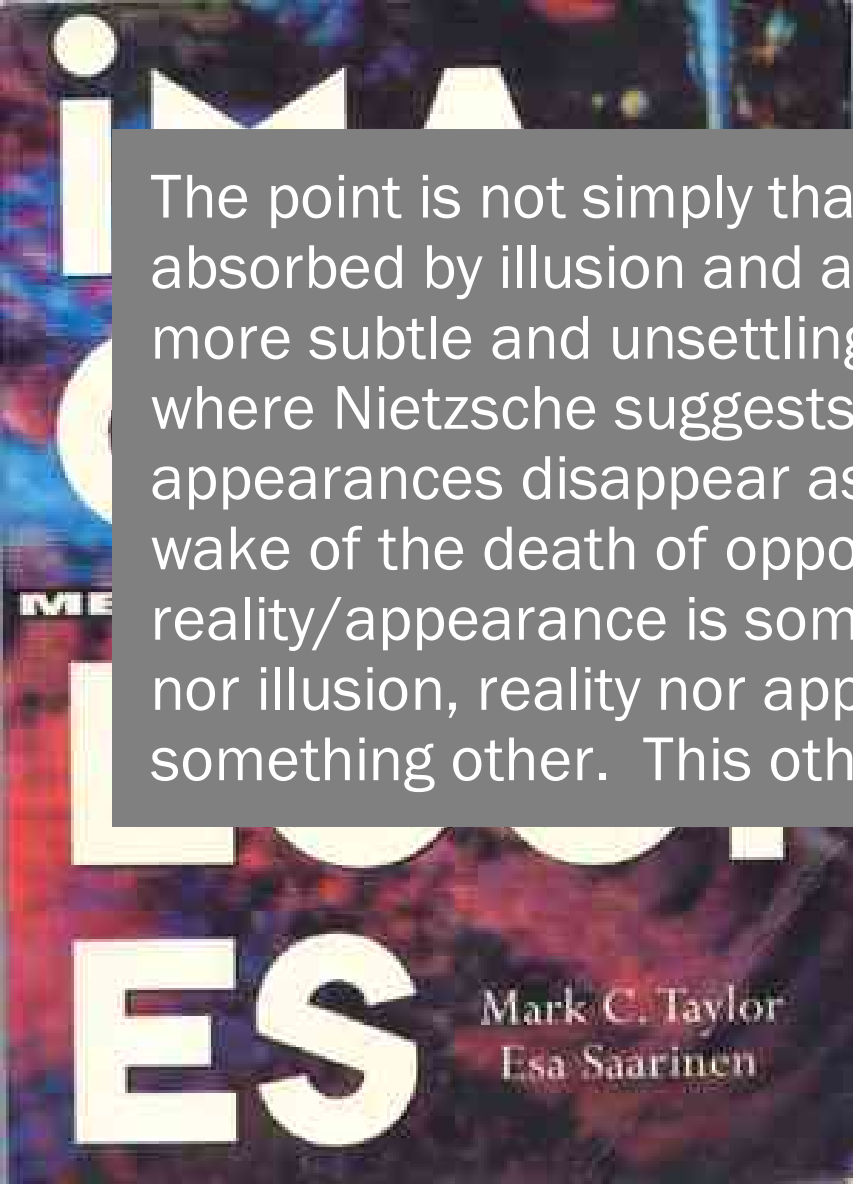


My philosophy is a *reversed Platonism*. The farther removed from true beings, all the purer more beautiful and better it is. Life in illusion as goal.





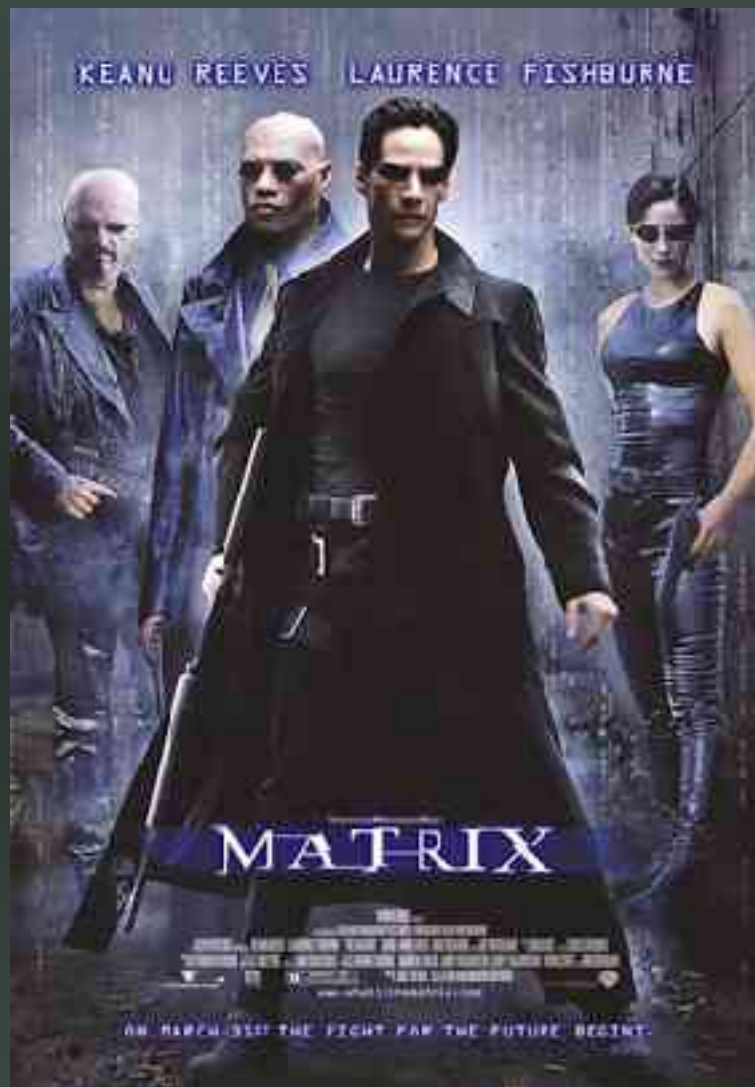
The true world—we have abolished.  
What world has remained? The  
apparent one perhaps? But no! With  
the true world we have also abolished  
the apparent one

The image shows the cover of the book 'The Illusion of Reality' by Mark C. Taylor and Esa Saarinen. The cover features a dark, abstract background with vibrant, swirling colors of blue, red, and purple. Large, white, stylized letters are scattered across the cover, including 'i', 'M', 'A', 'E', 'S', and 'ES'. A semi-transparent grey box is overlaid on the right side of the cover, containing a paragraph of text in white font. The text discusses the relationship between truth, reality, illusion, and appearance, referencing Nietzsche's philosophy.

The point is not simply that truth and reality have been absorbed by illusion and appearance. Something far more subtle and unsettling is taking place. Somewhere Nietzsche suggests that when reality is effaced, appearances disappear as well. What emerges in the wake of the death of oppositions like truth/illusion and reality/appearance is something that is neither truth nor illusion, reality nor appearance but something else, something other. This other is as yet unnamed.

Mark C. Taylor  
Esa Saarinen

KEANU REEVES LAURENCE FISHBURNE



# MATRIX

AN HARVEY WEINSTEIN PRODUCTION  
THE FIGHT FOR THE FUTURE BEGINS.

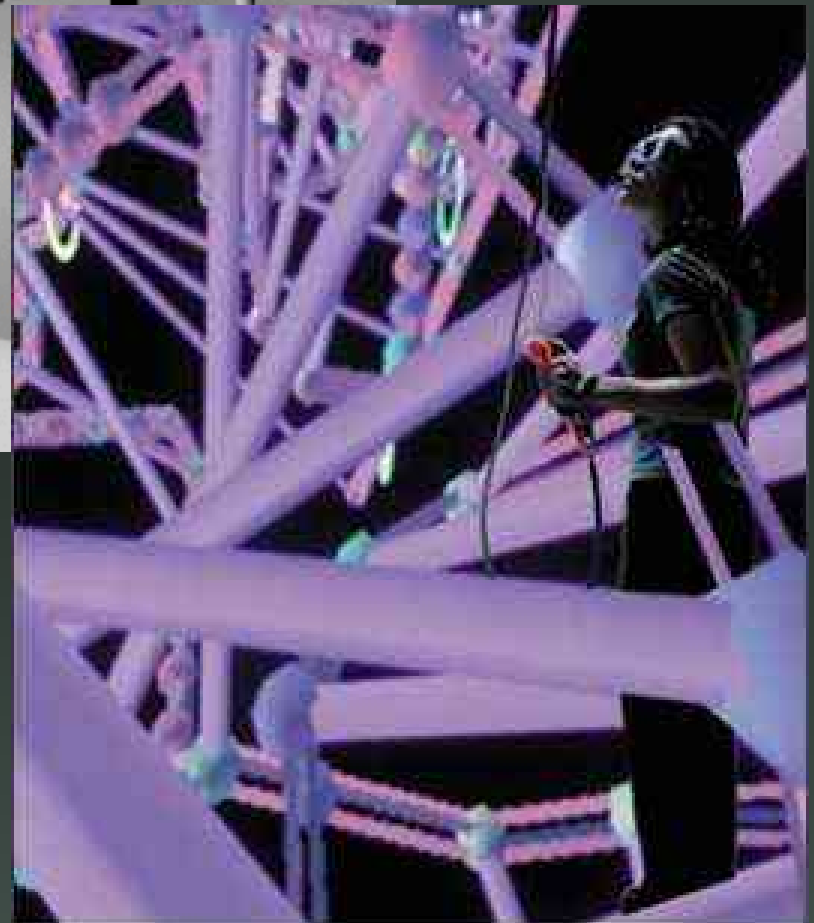
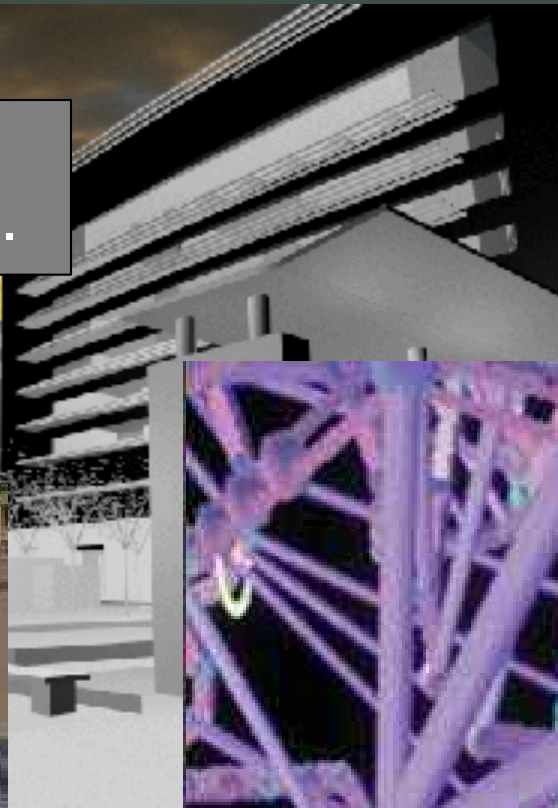






It is less a matter of being pro- or anti-matrix, but of developing a critical perspective on the ethics of virtuality.

Platonism as a working product (Heim, 1993, p. 89).



# ΦΑΙΔΡΟΣ

[Ἡ ΠΕΡΙ ΚΑΛΟΥ ἨΘΙΚΟΣ]

SL  
III  
f-227

ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΙΑΛΟΓΟΥ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ  
ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΦΑΙΔΡΟΣ

Α. 1. ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ. ὦ φίλε Φαῖδρε, ποῖ δὴ καὶ ποῦ  
ΦΑΙΔΡΟΣ. Παρὰ Λυσίου, ὦ Σώκρατες,  
Κεφάλου· πορεύομαι δὲ πρὸς περίπατον  
τείχους· συχνὸν γὰρ ἐκεῖ διέτριψα χρόνον κ  
μενος ἐξ ἰωθινοῦ· τῷ δὲ σὺ καὶ ἐμὲ ἐτα  
πειθόμενος ἄκουμένῳ κατὰ τὰς ὁδοὺς ποιο  
τοὺς περιπάτους· φησὶ γὰρ ἀκοπιτέρους κ  
B τῶν ἐν τοῖς δρόμοις.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ. Καλῶς γάρ, ὦ ἑταῖρε, λέγει. κ  
Λυσίας ἦν, ὡς εἰκεν, ἐν ἄστει.

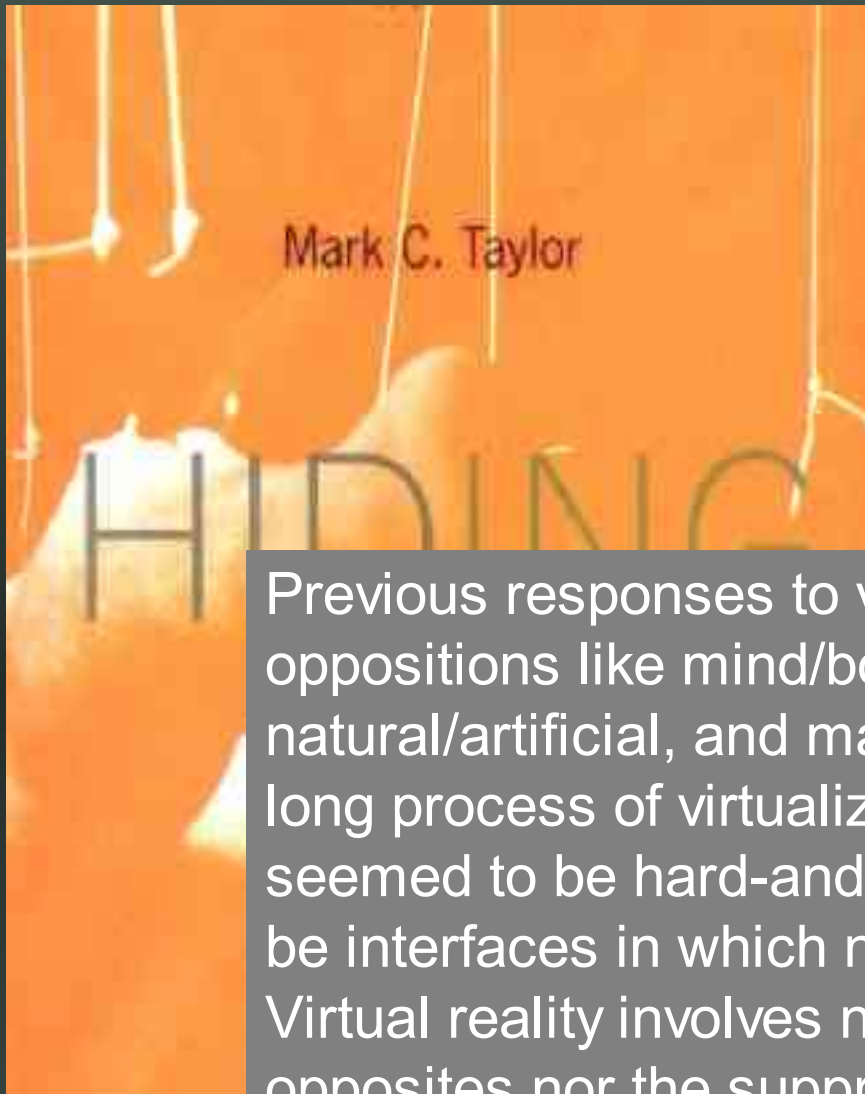
ΦΑΙΔΡΟΣ. Ναί, παρ' Ἐπικράτει, ἐν τῇδε  
πλησίον τοῦ Ὀλυμπίου οἰκίᾳ τῇ Μορυγίᾳ.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ. Τίς οὖν δὴ ἦν ἡ διατριβή; ἢ δ  
ἐτι τῶν λόγων ὑμᾶς Λυσίας εἰστία;

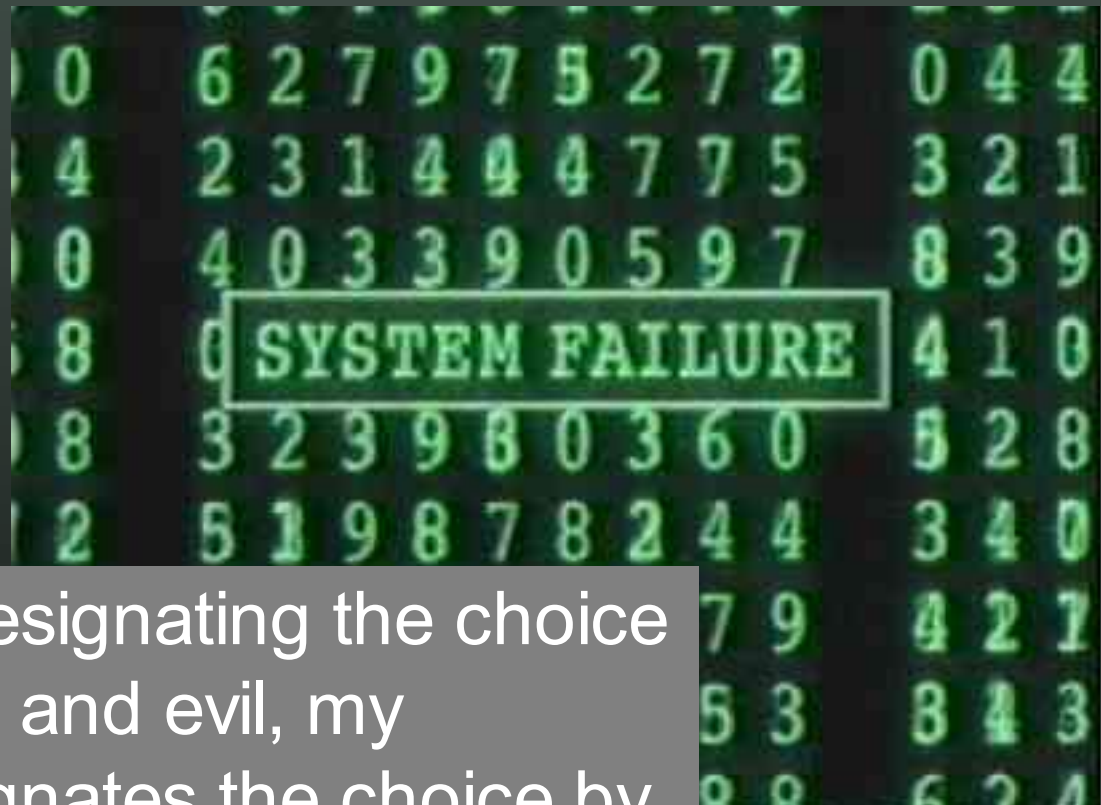
ΦΑΙΔΡΟΣ. Πεύσει, εἰ σοι σχολὴ προῖοντι  
ἀκούειν.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ. Τί δέ; οὐκ ἂν οἶε με κατὰ Πίν-





Previous responses to virtual reality reinscribe oppositions like mind/body, human/machine, natural/artificial, and material/immaterial, which the long process of virtualizing reality subverts. What once seemed to be hard-and-fast oppositions now appear to be interfaces in which neither term remains the same. Virtual reality involves neither the synthesis of opposites nor the suppression of one term by the other but gives rise to a different order of 'reality' that eludes traditional classificatory structures



Rather than designating the choice between good and evil, my Either/Or designates the choice by which one chooses good and evil or rules them out.

Søren Kierkegaard