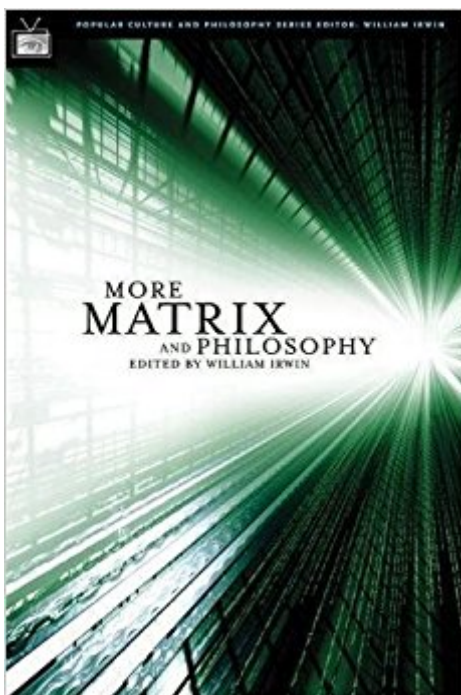


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More Matrix And Philosophy: Revolutions And Reloaded Decoded (Popular Culture And Philosophy)



Synopsis

The three films comprising The Matrix have become a genuine cultural phenomenon; More Matrix and Philosophy enriches both the enjoyment of the films and the understanding of life today. Broken down into several "Scenes" More Matrix and Philosophy tackles issues of fate, the concept of freedom, the metaphysical links in the three films, the impact of the music chosen, race, love and the meaning of it all.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

William Irwin is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at King's College, Pennsylvania. He has edited "Seinfeld and Philosophy: A Book About Everything and Nothing

I have wanted this book for the longest time and was immediately glad that it was available and at an affordable price. I am one of the few people who actually enjoyed the Matrix 2&3, so having someone prove that there was actually some merit to the movies is very rewarding. The book itself was again very affordable and wrapped for protection very effectively.

Pretty good. A bit complex and required me to reread a few sections, but I still loved the book.

Overall, my reaction to this book is mixed. It contains 16 essays, some excellent, some decent, and some poor. In my view, this book is not as good as its predecessor, The Matrix and Philosophy:

Welcome to the Desert of the Real, and if you have not yet purchased it, you should certainly do so before buying this book. The first book (Volume 3 in Open Court's Popular Culture and Philosophy Series) is, in my estimation, the crown jewel of the series, so the expectations for this book were high. If you enjoyed that book, you will most likely enjoy this one as well, but the reasons for my less-than-wholehearted recommendation are contained in my reviews of the following chapters:

Ch. 1. The Matrix and Plato's Cave: Why the Sequels Failed, by Lou Marinoff: The essay begins by discussing how The Matrix helps philosophy instructors to introduce classical philosophical questions and ideas. He then, as the title says, discusses why the sequels failed. His overall idea is interesting, but the essay is philosophically poor. He discusses Plato and invokes certain Platonic concepts in order to make his argument, but the aspects of Plato's philosophy that he relies upon (i.e. the theory of Forms) are not taken seriously by philosophers anymore (and with very good reason). If he just wanted to use Plato in order to introduce certain ideas, he should have said so. But relying on the Platonic concepts that he invokes in order to make an argument that is supposed to be taken seriously is just bad philosophy.

Ch. 4. The Matrix is the Prozac of the People, by Martin Danahay: This essay begins with Marx's famous quote, "Religion is the opium of the people." It offers a lucid introduction to Marx's views on religion and analyzes the sequels from Marx's point of view. I found this essay to be highly enjoyable philosophically thought provoking. I especially liked how the author placed Marx's oft-misinterpreted quote in context in order to illustrate its meaning.

Ch. 6. Choice, Purpose, and Understanding: Neo, the Merovingian, and the Oracle, by Theodore Schick, Jr.: This essay has its good points, but it could have been much better. The author uses characters from the film in order to illustrate the three traditional philosophical approaches to the problem of free will and determinism: hard determinism, soft determinism, and libertarianism. The essay is interesting, and most of the philosophical points that are made are accurate. However, there are two main confusions that are likely to mislead readers:

1. The author does not make it clear that the free will/determinism debate is different from the free will/fatalism debate. In other words, the concepts of causal determinism and fate both pose a threat to the belief in free will, but they pose different threats. Novices often have trouble understanding this (I know this because I've taught about the free will issue in my class many times), so an essay aimed at them should seek to clarify this confusion.
2. The randomness introduced into the universe at the quantum level does introduce indeterminacy, but it does not introduce control. Quite the opposite: random events are uncontrolled. Unfortunately, the author makes a common undergraduate error here: attempting to draw a substantial philosophical conclusion from a very complex scientific theory without adequately explaining the details of the theory. I'm not suggesting that he should have

explained the details of the theory, but his discussion of quantum mechanics and its implications is problematic and likely to mislead.

Ch. 12. Faith, Understanding, and the Hidden God of The Matrix, by William Jaworski: This essay presents a lucid account of the view that "faith consists in trusting God". It is likely to give pause to those who dismiss faith with a wave of the hand. The references to the film and the interpretations of the dialogue seem to be on the mark. The author makes it clear that the purpose of the essay is to give the reader food for thought, and thereby follows the dictum "Do not claim more than you have shown." My only complaint: the author could have gone to greater lengths to show that his conception of faith is not the only conception of faith. He claims that faith "consists in believing in something... not believing that something...". This claim is controversial, but he makes it seem as though he's offering a standard definition of the term.

Ch. 15. Pissin' Metal: Columbine, Malvo, and the Matrix of Violence, by Henry Nardone and Gregory Bassham: This is an excellent essay. It is written in a conversational style, and is funny and engaging. It discusses the research on the relationship between violence in entertainment and violent behavior, and then mentions cases in which it seems as though The Matrix may have had a profound influence on certain killers. The following questions are then raised: "Should those who can show that they have been injured by film-inspired violence be able to sue filmmakers to recover damages? Do those responsible for producing such films - and the Matrix trilogy in particular - bear any moral responsibility for the crimes of those disturbed individuals who may be inspired by the films to act violently?" The essay contains a thought provoking discussion of these questions.

Ch. 16. Reloaded Revolutions, by Slavoj Zizek: This essay is very poor. The author presents himself as arrogant and self-important, and the philosophy and the concepts employed are opaque and obscure. Early in the essay, we have the following sentence: "This search for the philosophical content of The Matrix is therefore a lure, a trap to be avoided." The author then proceeds to spend 10 pages... searching for the philosophical content of The Matrix. I don't know if I'm missing something here, but if I am, I'm sure a lot of other people are as well. When writing philosophy, it's your job to make your ideas clear so that your audience can understand your ideas and the purpose of your essay. This essay fails miserably in this respect. It is Continental Philosophy at its worst, the kind that gives good Continental Philosophy a bad name. It strikes me as an odd choice for the final essay in the book. Ch. 15 would have been an excellent note to end on. I hope that this review has helped you to decide whether or not to purchase this book.

Being a majorly fanatical fan of anything connected with The Matrix, I was also somewhat disappointed at first with the two sequels. So, with some interest, I approached "More Matrix and

Philosophy" wondering what the contributors were going to say about these two movies. First up, as others have mentioned, I would also reiterate that one should read "The Matrix and Philosophy" before approaching this book. Some contributors make reference to that book, and use it as a spring board for some further development of ideas. Also, on one occasion, a contributor in "More Matrix" takes a mild stab at a contributor in the first volume. In this current volume, one is taken through 4 Scenes, which have 16 essays categorised across them. Some who contributed to the last book are back again. The essays cover a very interesting range of ideas, and have a lot of diversity among them. These include essays on faith, nihilism, God, Islamic cosmology, the Vedanta of Hinduism, race, determinism and choice, and a lot more besides. The range of topics is impressive, and kept me hooked right through the book. For those frustrated by the first volume's repeated flogging of Plato's "cave analogy", you will be gratified to know that it is only mentioned a couple of times, and not really discussed in any detail outside the first chapter. In general, I found that the contributors made an excellent survey of the movies, and also brought out some very interesting issues. I didn't find that I disliked any of the essays, though on some points I disagreed with them. In general, the contributions were interesting, well-written, at times humorous, and easily understood. In this follow-up volume, I think that the book defies Lou Marinoff's idea that sequels are generally bound to fail, ("Why the Sequels Failed", in this book). I found it to be in some ways more interesting than the first volume, and wider in the various aspects that it discussed. If you have read and enjoyed *The Matrix and Philosophy: Welcome to the Desert of the Real* (Popular Culture and Philosophy), then I really recommend this book to you. It is another book that you don't need to worry about meaty words with, and it is accessible to everyone. In short, it is a great book.

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