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Matrix Imploded: Trouble in Zion

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Directing duo Andy and Larry Wachowski created a masterpiece in *The Matrix*, where Neo (Keanu Reeves), a computer programmer, takes a little red pill and sees the world for what it is -- a sophisticated software program in which humans (enslaved by robots) play an insignificant part. It's what the likes of Timothy Leary have been saying for years.

The movie jumped the barrier from special-effects blockbuster to [second](#), in part because it expressed the spiritual mood and philosophy of the 1990s -- that humans could do anything if they could free their minds, believe in themselves and see the world as simply software code -- ones and zeros. Of course, carrying a big gun and being really good at kung fu also helped.

The Matrix Revolutions is no masterpiece. It lacks the depth of the first movie and undoes the logic of the second film. Still, if all that doesn't trouble you, having your senses bombarded by special effects and action sequences isn't a bad way to spend a couple of hours.

Revolutions is, like the first *Matrix*, a product of its time. In this movie, the apocalypse is upon Zion (the last real-world human city), the Oracle (Mary Alice) chain-smokes and no longer has the answers, and nothing makes much sense any more.

That is ... except love. But even then, the message rings hollow. The love affair between Neo and the kinky latex-clad Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss) is unconvincing. Indeed, the movie itself undermines the "love can save all" theme wherever it can. "Only a human mind could come up with anything as feeble as love," says the wonderfully malevolent Agent Smith (Hugo Weaving), whose acting as a software program outshines his supposedly real-world counterparts.

The movie opens where the forgettable *The Matrix Reloaded* (the second in the series) left off, with Neo in a coma. Only it turns out that he's really just

stuck waiting for a train between this world and the Matrix. Public transportation can be like that.

The first half of the movie is taken up with Trinity and Morpheus (Laurence Fishburn) rescuing their savior. This, of course, involves some serious ass kicking, a visit to the Matrix, a trip to a nightclub and a showdown with a bad Frenchman, Merovingian (Lambert Wilson).

Once rescued, Neo insists on a visit to the Oracle. She tells him "everything that has a beginning has an end," and that he'll know what to do when the time comes.

In other words, the philosophy and theology in the first movie that prompted books like *The Matrix and Philosophy: Welcome to the Desert of the Real* and *Taking the Red Pill: Science, Philosophy and Religion in The Matrix* are replaced by a series of platitudes such as "believe," it's just about "choices" and "that's karma," baby.

So Neo has no idea what to do. Goes to his room aboard the *Mjolnir*. Hangs out. He and his sweetie take a trip to see a man about a robot or a robot about a man. Whatever. This excuses Neo (presumably he had another movie to work on) from the film's main action sequence, in which a very large dental drill plus an awful lot of electrical conduit start to rip Zion apart. The humans protect themselves with some big guns, some very small bombs and weapons that look suspiciously like camcorders (perhaps a futuristic legacy of the embedded reporter). Eventually, the robots start to adopt the behavior of a swarm.

Got it? No? Me neither.

The film borrows heavily from *Superman*, Japanese animé and *Starship Troopers* to produce a world that is much closer to a video game than a movie. Which is perhaps the point, as the film precedes a multiplayer game.

Still, while critics and Neo-philes seem to hate this movie as much as *The Matrix Reloaded*, that may not matter to the film's backers.

Indeed, everybody hated *The Matrix Reloaded*, except the cinema-going public -- which made it the third highest-grossing movie in 2003.

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