

Synchronistic Linguistics in The Matrix

Or How Bob Dobbs Became the Tetrad Manager

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by Robert Guffey

"To use the images of the city is not appropriate to our time. The real city today is Magnetic City. Magnetic City is the whole world in a little acoustic imitation of resonating electromagnetic white light. We're all on that little node. It can't be visualized, but the whole world is on that spot all the time, and that's the state of being discarnate. To someone who wants to have visual parameters, that's a very claustrophobic thing to imagine. But we are stuck in that. That's why people are channeling. That's why people are doing all the various things that have been surprising to Americans for the past twenty years. They're trying to erase their body, and the motive for that is the sensory-structural change resulting from electric conditions. Did you know that even speaking, even not being in a trance, is a form of trance under electric conditions? Just walking around is a form of trance today because any bodily activity is inside this little electronic, discarnate node of consciousness called Magnetic City."

Bob Dobbs (Dave Porter Interview 10/16/88)

An interesting parallel to the above view is expressed by a hypnotist named Jack True. In the epilogue to Jon Rappoport's 1998 book *The Secret Behind Secret Societies*, True makes the incredible statement that he's "stopped doing hypnosis on most people" because most of his clients are already in a hypnotic trance when they walk into his office!

"The modern idea that surrounds our society is that by being nice, by being very nice you will fit into the system around you and everyone else will be happy with you. The only thing is, everything around you is hypnotic. I mainly find myself doing reverse-hypnosis these days. I do things to wake people up."

As I write this on the night of April 25th, 1999, a film called *The Matrix* is number one at the box office. Though by no means a perfect science fiction movie, it still manages to pack one hell of a wallop. I'd hardly put it on the same scale as *2001: A Space Odyssey* or *Brazil*, or even *Blade Runner*, but at the same time I don't believe the flaws in the film represent a weakness on the part of the Wachowski Brothers' writing talents. I believe the film is designed to disseminate a subversive message through the filter of popular culture. As Marshall McLuhan said, "Anything that's popular is a rear-view image."

The Matrix is not about the future, it's about the past: circa 1945, to be exact. The Wachowski Brothers' previous film, *Bound*, received good reviews but fared poorly at the box office, which proves to me that they're more than capable of non-generic, non-traditional writing. I suspect the overly-long fight scenes and limited characterizations are specifically intended to lull the viewers into a hypnotic state, to drag their brainwaves down into alpha, at which point the filmmakers slam the message home: 'Wake Up, You're Being Controlled.'

This is a cliché.

Clichés are obsolete.

"If it works, it's obsolete." Marshall McLuhan explains this quite well in the first chapter of his 1964 book *Understanding Media*.

I could compare *The Matrix* to ancient Vedic philosophy, Hassan-i-Sabbah ("Nothing is real, everything is permitted"), the experimental novels of William S. Burroughs (*The Reality Studio in Naked Lunch*), Philip K. Dick's series of solipsistic novels (*Eye in the Sky*, *Ubik*, *A Maze of Death*, not to mention dozens of others), recent proponents of VR technology (Jaron

Lanier), and the best-selling novels of William Gibson.

But, this film has almost nothing to do with any of those things. Halfway through, I realized it was all about Bob Dobbs. Not J.R. Bob Dobbs; the real Bob Dobbs. The real Bob Dobbs has nothing to do with the Church of the SubGenius, was never assassinated in San Francisco, and doesn't even smoke a pipe. He is the guiding intelligence behind two quirky CDs entitled Bob's Media Ecology and Bob's Media Ecology2 (which features the music of Negativland, Coldcut and Steinski), a radio play entitled Who's Forgotten Furry Lint? (a Bob Marshall production), and the author of Phatic Communion With Bob Dobbs. (Perfect Pitch Editions, 1992)

Bob Dobbs is an expert on communications theory and was a colleague of Marshall McLuhan at the Center for Culture and Technology in Toronto, Ontario. For several years during the mid-'80s he was the personal advisor to investigative journalist Bob Marshall, who hosted a radio show on CKLN-FM called the International Connection. The show regularly featured the information of groundbreaking conspiracy theorists such as Mae Brussell, Sherman Skolnick, Dr. Peter Beter, and Lyndon LaRouche's Executive Intelligence Review. Adam Vaughan, the manager of the station, fired Marshall early in 1987 for broadcasting Dr. Beter's "antiSemitic rants" against the Rothschilds. The fact that Beter railed against the Rockefellers just as much as the Rothschilds apparently went right over Vaughan's head. Dobbs later replaced Marshall on the air, and has since followed a rather interesting career trajectory. According to him, he's taken over the Earth.

Dobbs is a brilliant but eccentric fellow who claims to be the leader of "The Secret Council of Ten," a shadowy cabal that controls the world using complicated techniques known as "synchronistic-linguistics" and "tetrad management." As far as I know, the latter term was first developed by Marshall McLuhan and his son Eric in their 1988 book *Laws of Media: The New Science*. The tetrad is a four-step process that analyzes the projected evolution of man-made artifacts; you might say it's a means of predicting the future of humanity by predicting the future of its technology. Dobbs claims the NSA and other intelligence organizations utilize the techniques outlined in *Laws of Media* to manage world affairs. He also claims that he and his

colleagues are engaged in the same exact activities. Thus, he refers to himself as "The Tetrad Manager."

Though he looks no older than 35, he claims to have been born on Feb. 2nd, 1922. When asked to explain this incongruity he explains that a unique device known as the D-Cell has enabled him to maintain the veneer of youth even though he's really going on 78 years old. He also claims to be "the only artist alive today." When asked to elaborate he replies that everyone else in the world is really dead, therefore he feels completely at ease with declaring himself "the only artist alive today." According to Dobbs everyone else disappeared in 1945, leaving behind a world of "holeopathic retrievals."

"Holeopathic," he explains, is a mixture of "homeopathy" and "hologram." Homeopathy is a form of medical treatment where the physician takes the essence of a substance and dilutes it, the theory being that the tinier the dose the more potent it is. A hologram is an artificial environment indistinguishable from the reality upon which it's based. Dobbs claims it was the implementation of what he calls "the solar government" in 1945 that caused the disappearance of Earth's entire population, who were then replaced with holograms. This means that succeeding generations are mere holograms of holograms of holograms, ad infinitum. The tinier the holograms, the more realistic and engaging the artificial environment becomes, hence the term "holeopathic retrieval." In order to break out of this program, he claims we must become what he calls "menippean satirists."

The word "menippean" is derived from the Greek writer Menippus, who lived around 230 B.C. According to Dobbs, "He mixed prose and poetry and different styles in a rather anarchistic way, and that mixing of styles is traditionally called menippean satire by historians." (Interview 7/24/93)

Though it's not quite clear - Dobbs' explanations tend to lean toward the abstract to say the least - by advising us all to become menippean satirists, he's suggesting metaphorically that we need to learn how to flip in and out of various environments at will, just as Menippus flipped in and out of various writing styles. We have to learn to wear our environments like clothing.

Dobbs goes on to explain, referring to himself in the third person, "the goddess Circe turned men to swine. Bob's role is to return the swine - or our media extensions as the new animals - to human form again, to get back out of the tiny diluted homeopathic level. I'm here to retrieve our human-scale identity." Dobbs' solution to this is surprising:

We as secret discarnate menippean satirists who follow Bob, what do we do? We know that we don't want to be just discarnate. We want to retrieve the human form. What is the one religion that celebrates the human form in an individualistic sense, not in the Oriental sense of the human gnostic pleasure machine of the body? The Christian concept of the human body - God in flesh, as Christ manifested in his individuation of that process. One individual, not a tribe.

We as discarnate menippean ironists, we put on Catholicism in the sense of the true Christian tradition of celebrating the human form over all technological amplifications of it. So we're secretly Catholics."

Despite this, Dobbs maintains the Pope is the Anti-Christ. "He's acting out that potential of the Christian mythic tradition," Dobbs explains:

The problem is the Pope believes he has a human body in the first nature sense, what I call the anthropomorphic image of oneself. The aristocrats rule with that image by controlling land, like feudalism. They think - and hope - that the planet is still there. They do not want you to realize that Nature dropped out and there's no basis for land, wealth, or gold.

So their efforts are to move us back to a gold-based economy based on Prince Charles running the show. This is the strategy of the Anti-Christ: to leap back to first nature, to use the images of first nature and claim that he is the Tetrad Manager. That's why, all around the Earth, they're solving the debt crisis by allowing the Third World countries to cancel the debt if they give over wilderness lands to the central banks, because the oligarchs want to occupy the first nature.

I'm an anti-environment to that. Bob hoicks up the values of the discarnate

state, the electric environment that keeps Nature in a subordinate role. In other words Bob enhances the discarnate virtual reality image, which can't be bought, sold, or stolen. This is done as an ironic strategy in opposition to Prince Charles, who wants to stay in one fixed position. Secretly, followers of Bob will return to their anthropomorphic bodies, but with full awareness of how they lost them. Anybody can flip out of the body and become discarnate, and like a menippean satirist go back and forth into the first nature [original nature] and second nature [virtual reality]. (Ken Yas Interview 5/4/95)

I first heard Bob Dobbs on May 29th, 1993 early one Saturday morning on KPFK in Los Angeles. I tuned in thinking Mr. Dobbs was in some way connected to the Church of the SubGenius. I expected to hear Rev. Ivan Stang's typically irreverent (irrelevant?), quasi-religious rants about the Illuminati-controlled "pinks" attempting to steal "slack" from SubGenii wealthy enough to mail a dollar bill to Stang's Church. As you've already seen, what I got was something quite different indeed.

Particularly delightful was hearing the callers trying to make sense of this confusing and yet oddly sensible melange of heady scholarship and absurd non sequiturs. Chats with Bob induce quite a vertiginous sensation in the average Homo sapien. One second you'll be listening to a postgraduate-level lecture on the effects of mass communications on society, then before you can escape you're being assaulted by a non-stop stream of bizarre theories bordering on the surreal. For example: in September of 1977 the Rockefeller's secret moonbase was destroyed by the Russians' Particle Beam weapon during the Battle of the Harvest Moon, Henry Kissinger was killed in 1979 and replaced with a Russian Robotoid, three years after which (on Sept. 17, 1982) Dobbs joined forces with Richard Nixon and Dr. Beter to interrupt "the Bolsheviks' attempt to start Nuclear War One with a First Strike against the Soviet Union." (Dobbs 125)

This is a mere fraction of the phantasmagoria that comes twirling out of Dobbs' mouth with the grace of a Bolshoi ballerina. One's initial reaction might be that of utter skepticism, but as Marshall McLuhan writes in his 1972 book *Take Today*: "Only puny secrets need protection. Big discoveries are protected by public incredulity." (92)

My own skepticism of Dobbs' omniscience has waned over the years for a variety of reasons. I have a taped interview with Dobbs recorded on October 16th, 1988 in which he accurately predicts the fall of the Berlin Wall almost to the exact day. To suggest such a possibility when the Cold War was at its most frigid seemed like pure science fiction. Today it seems more like supernatural prescience. Further credibility surrounds Dobbs' strange pronouncements. In the last chapter of the meticulously researched book Operation Mind Control (Chp. 41, pg. 15), journalist Walter Bowart writes:

When I last saw Bob, between meetings of a Finnegans Wake study group, he was making an in-depth study of Norman Mailer's novel, Harlot's Ghost, and trying to explain how he was actually the central character in the book. Shortly after I visited Bob, I visited Fletcher Prouty [former advisor to President Kennedy and author of The Secret Team]. He had read Harlot's Ghost and had made a list of character's names beside which he wrote the names of real people he thought they might be. He sent the list to Mailer who wrote back telling him he'd gotten all of them right except one.

Tetrad Management

Mysterious little synchronicities like these abound and soon become commonplace once you've been exposed to Dobbs. You begin to see hints of Dobbs' Tetrad Management everywhere - on license plates and old television shows, in crop circles and cigarette ads, in pinball machines and star-studded blockbuster movies... like The Matrix.

If I didn't know any better, I'd suspect that the Wachowski Bros. worked side by side with Dobbs to slip in signs of his presence throughout the course of the entire film. Keanu Reeves' character Neo (an obvious anagram for "one") is jumpstarted out of his humdrum existence by the use of synchronistic linguistics. During an interview on KPFK broadcast on September 24th, 1994, the following exchange occurs between Dobbs and an anonymous caller:

Caller: For the individual who called earlier who was wondering what you were talking about, I think you should've at least given him one word:

synchronistic-linguistics. Basically that's what you're doing, you're just trying to encourage people to recognize the patterns for themselves - the ever-densifying retrievals of synchronicity.

Dobbs: You're making me feel like Rumplestiltskin. Remember how Rumplestiltskin did not want his name known? You have named me pretty accurately. Synchronistic-linguistics, if you include all technologies as linguistics, is the right term.

Caller: Yeah, exactly. And that's what Finnegans Wake presaged. That's what's so brilliant about it.

Dobbs: That's the electric environment. Dan Rather does synchronistic-linguistics. That's what Tetrad Management is, as it comes out of the DIA and the National Security Agency. That's how they manage the Global Theatre, through synchronistic linguistics which really numbs the population. So I am a mirror of that.

Caller: Well, they strive for control but the true natural phenomenon of synchronicity, as I'm often want to say, is the only thing they - whoever "they" are - can't actually control, not in the ultimate sense of Rupert Sheldrake's conceptions about morphogenesis and synchronistic patterns.

Dobbs: No, they can't control your private citadel of consciousness, and that means they can't control you, but they can control our synthetic crowd behavior. That's what you've got to realize. You've got to realize they are controlling us through synchronistic linguistics. They call it the audience participation mystique. They allow everybody to roam the planet to be what they want to be. In other words, read Marshall McLuhan's essay called "Catholic Humanism in Modern Letters" where he says the world government in 1954 understood that Finnegans Wake was the key to world management. They understood that, that early, and Marshall blew the whistle on them and they really nailed him for it.

Synchronistic-Linguistics: The White Rabbit

A cryptic message appears on Neo's computer. The message reads: "Wake

up, Neo. The Matrix has you. Follow the White Rabbit. Knock, knock, Neo."

At that exact moment he hears two successive knocks at the door. He opens the door and sees a tattoo of a white rabbit on a woman's shoulder. The woman leads him out of his apartment, the little urban cocoon where most of his life is spent plugged into the electric "mood-mud" of the mixed corporate-media environment - what Bob Dobbs calls "Magnetic City."

The white rabbit (i.e., synchronistic-linguistics) helps lead the hypnotized Neo to take his first tentative steps from second nature back to first nature. He follows the tattooed woman to a night club where he first meets Trinity, the woman who will later fall in love with him as well as save his life. The Catholic overtones of the name Trinity should be obvious. (Trinity is also the name of the site in New Mexico where the first atom bomb was detonated in 1945, the same year Dobbs claims everything disappeared and was replaced by homeopathic retrievals.)

Trinity leads Neo to Morpheus, ostensibly the head of an underground faction of renegade hackers. In Greek mythology, of course, Morpheus was one of the sons of Hypnos, the god of sleep. According to Funk & Wagnalls' Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend, "Morpheus either gave shape to dreams or brought dreams of human figures." (749) This is interesting, for when Jack True says he has to "wake people up," he actually means the exact opposite. According to Dobbs, we're under reverse conditions in the electric environment. As can be seen in McLuhan's Laws of Media, every tetrad eventually flips into its opposite function. As Dobbs says, "First technology flips, then information itself flips." (Interview 7/24/93)

Under the category of the word "information" you could include human language. The Wachowski Bros. must be aware of this, at least on a subconscious level. Though the initial message sent to Neo reads "Wake up," they purposely give Neo's mentor the name of a mythological figure who puts people to sleep. This paradox represents the tetrad-flip. Under electric conditions the second-nature body is overstimulated to the point of constant awareness. In Magnetic City nobody sleeps. Therefore, it's intriguing that the Wachowski Bros. chose as their mythological template not Icalus or

Phantasmus, or Hypnos himself, but Morpheus - who specializes in dreams of the human form. Morpheus' goal, like Dobbs, is to retrieve Neo's human-scale identity.

Only seconds after typing the last paragraph, purely by accident, I came across the following sentence in one of Dobbs' manifestoes: "This New Batch, the generation born since 1990, are even-tempered, tolerant menippeans (I suggest they are Morphic Spirals - Morpheus having been the son of the god of Sleep) as opposed to the glowing Boomer menippeans and the glum X-er menippeans." ("Silencing the Virtually Solar Theater" 6) Another example of synchronistic-linguistics at work? As Hunter S. Thompson likes to say, "Res Ipsa Loquitur."

Morpheus offers Neo two pills, one red and one blue, an obvious parallel to the "Drink Me" sequence in Alice in Wonderland. After he swallows the red pill Neo begins to, in Jack True's terms, "wake up," (i.e., return to the first nature). The effects of the illusion of visual space slipping away from Neo is presented as an experience akin to an hallucinatory trip on LSD. Neo reaches out for a mirror, which represents visual space. To his surprise the mirror begins to dissolve and his fingers slip through the glass as if it's made of viscous liquid.

Though Wonderland's lost us for ever. Alas, alas, she broke the glass! (Joyce 270)

When Alice went through the vanishing point of the visual world, breaking the hardware of the looking-glass world, she became involved in a series of rapid metamorphoses, not unrelated to her tears. "Who am I, then? Tell me that first, and then, if I like being that person, I'll come up."... Lewis Carroll, a non-Euclidean mathematical professor, was the first to denote the dilemma of a print-oriented world in his fable. (McLuhan Culture Is Our Business 68)

The liquified mirror slithers up Neo's arm as if it's a living being. Within seconds it has covered his entire body. He has become subsumed by visual space. But as per the dictates of tetrad management, every environment eventually flips into its opposite form. Thus, the next time we encounter Neo

he will have flipped back into the first nature. But it's important to note that the mirror itself represents more than just a portal out of the second nature. During his 9/24/94 KPDK interview, the following exchange occurs between Dobbs and a caller who refers to himself as, of all things, Prof. Illuminatus:

Prof. Illuminatus: Is any of this close to the 'Crack in the Cosmic Egg,' the actual crack, the area of action that Joseph Chilton Pierce talks about?

Dobbs: No. The problem with the crack is that it's a visual image. It's an extension of the mirror. In my book, on the first page or so, you'll see the phrase The Analogical Mirrors. We have to look at a figure-ground. The Illuminati is a mirror, constantly through all time, but the conditions of the mirror changes. So the Western left hemisphere was a visual mirror - the egg with the crack - but now we're into an acoustic, tactile mirror. How do you mirror something that's essentially non-visual? That was attempted by James Joyce in Finnegans Wake. So the wisdom I offer today is how to be flexible in the modalities of The Analogical Mirrors. You could say that the lamp is the acoustic mirror because it's light-through. Symbolism of the nineteenth century played off the mirror vs. the lamp, the mirror as visual, the lamp as acoustic. The tactile mirror is me as I am today with you. That's a mirror for you, but it's not just a visible mirror. So know that the Crack in the Cosmic Egg is a rearview-mirror nostalgic retrieval.

The Mirror is the Illuminati.

The red pill enables Neo first to slip through the Illuminati-Buddhist virtual reality program, just as Alice slipped through the looking-glass, and then return to his anthropomorphic human form. On the other side of the mirror he meets the companions who will help him on his quest. Significantly, upon first meeting Neo each of the characters communes with him silently (i.e., phatically) except for the man named Cipher, who will later betray him. It's as if the filmmakers are using Cipher's verbality as a symbol of his future transgression. Cipher is not a true menippean, thus phatic communion is denied him.

Phatic Communion is the title of Bob Dobbs' book. "Phatic Communion" is

an obscure phrase first used in the 1920s by the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski in the book *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923) to describe unacknowledged communication networks among tribes, the archetypal clichés that are embedded so deeply in the culture that no one even realizes they exist. It can also be described as a form of communication where the verbal content is not intended literally; its true meaning, in fact, is completely different from the content of the message. Here's a good example provided by Dobbs himself:

"You approach somebody who's fixing a flat tire on a highway, and you're a stranger to that person, and you come up and say, 'Got a flat tire?' The person doesn't scream at you, 'What's it look like?!' He knows that you know he has a flat tire. The content of what you're saying is not the communication. It's a recognition of the person as a gesture, like waving." (Interview 7/24/93).

This is a fascinating concept. If you think about it, most jokes - particularly satire - could be considered phatic. Take Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal," for instance. The real meaning of the piece differs from the content. Taken literally, it seems to advocate not only mass infanticide but cannibalism as well. Taken phatically, we realize that it's a cry of moral outrage protesting the treatment of Ireland's lower classes.

Menippean satire is phatic.

When Dobbs encourages us to become menippeans he's really saying that we have to begin thinking of ourselves, the entire society, the Global Theatre itself, as nothing more than a joke. When taken literally this joke can actually seem quite depressing, which is why we somehow have to learn to transcend our collective content, the electric swill of Magnetic City. We have to learn to commune phatically in order to fully understand Dobbs' main message: everything's disappeared.

This, itself, is a phatic statement. The meaning of the phrase has nothing to do with the literal content. Dobbs is an artist. Under electric conditions, when nobody is listening to anything anyone is saying, when every being on the planet wishes to be the sole player on the stage of the Global Theatre, you

can't communicate directly if you wish to be understood. Like Menippus and Jonathan Swift and James Joyce and Marshall McLuhan and William Burroughs and Philip K. Dick and the Marx Bros. and the Wachowski Bros., you have to make an end-run around the Ivory Tower.

The Ivory Tower is now the Control Tower, and the Control Tower is in the mud.

Bob Dobbs, 5/4/95

The fifth element is mud.

Napolean Bonaparte, c. 1800

Neo's newfound companions reveal to him that the world he's known up till now is, in fact, nothing more than a virtual reality created by an Artificial Intelligence (AI) program grown so far out of control that it's taken over the Earth and now breeds humans on a mass scale in order to use their bodies as a constant source of energy, while imprisoning their minds in a complex virtual reality program they know as the "real world." You might think this is an unrealistic plot until you realize that the AI program represents the Anti-Bob, the faction of the Cryptocracy that wishes us to believe we still have physical bodies in the first-nature sense. The matrix is a form of phatic communion.

Neo's companions proceed to show him what a human being is capable of in a virtual reality program once he's no longer burdened by the illusion that he has a body. This was the key scene that clued me in on the fact that the entire film is actually about Bob Dobbs' ascension to the position of Tetrad Manager. A character named Tank sends Neo into the VR program to learn martial arts. The Wachowski Bros. could have had him learn karate, Kung Fu, Tae Kwon Do, the Mao Tse Tung Whirlwind Kick, whatever. They could've chosen anything. But what's the first word that comes out of Neo's mouth as he prepares to enter the training program? "Jujitsu." This is extremely significant from a Dobbsian perspective. I think you'll see why when you read the following excerpt from his 1/22/94 interview on Dave Porter's "Genesis of a Music":

Caller: Good morning, sir. I've been listening to the radio since seven o'clock this morning. I've been listening to a very interesting program, but I don't really know what it's all about. I turned it on when this Bob fellow said, "I'm going to be doing an interview with Frank Zappa in two years even though he's already dead," then later on I hear him say he's really a black woman. Is he a man, is he a woman? What does holistic music mean? I'm confused... but it's interesting. Thank you.

[This isn't the first time Dobbs has claimed to be a black woman; it's a motif that pops up over and over again in his dialogues. In light of this fact, perhaps it would be relevant to note that at a crucial point in the film Neo receives spiritual guidance from a black woman known only as The Oracle.]

Host: And thank you. Final comments?

Dobbs: That's a very perceptive interpretation, a very honest interpretation of the effects of me and tetrad management. Did he say the phrase "holistic music"?

Host: Yeah, I think he mistook "homeopathic retrieval" for "holistic music."

Dobbs: [Laughs] Well, what this show is about is, uh . . . Who's Forgotten Furry Lint? That's what it's about. And it's within the context of Hand Signals For The Blind. But it's about - your ears may not believe it - it's about the person who controls this Global Theatre. And I don't control it in a dictatorial George Bush sense. I control it through jujitsu. So this caller has been listening for an hour and a half to the most aware, most conscious person in the world. And, of course, if you are aware then you're a chameleon. The menippean tactility of the mixed corporate-media puts people, all of us, through many changes of form and shape and desire. Therefore, I have to manifest this as part of my satire, not that the satire isn't based on a real science. I don't mean to be arbitrary in my satire. It's like McLuhan used to say, "Humor is part of learning." When you're laughing, you're learning. So, I have to mime the environment that I'm describing. During a press conference on shortwave radio, they actually have on tape Ronald Reagan being asked if he was a woman, and him saying "Yes."

The mere mention of the word "jujitsu" in *The Matrix*, and its role as the covert objective correlative of the plot, clearly draws the subtext of the film into the Dobbsian superstructure. Though the basic framework (i.e., the figure) of the film isn't too dissimilar from other entries in the ever-growing action adventure genre, the use of Bob Dobbs' special brand of menippean satire (i.e., the hidden ground) lifts *The Matrix* to a much higher realm worthy of deeper critical analysis than there's room for in a single article.

I believe the recurrence throughout the film of palindromic numbers such as 101 and 303 represent ternary ciphers pointing toward Dobbs' secret influence on the filmmakers. "Bob," after all, is a palindrome reduced to its smallest possible size, not unlike a homeopathic retrieval. The smaller the palindrome, the more powerful its resonance in the human mind. As Dobbs himself says, "BOB is sort of like the OM concept. It contains all sounds, all words, all artefacts." (Interview 5/4/95)

The conclusion of the film truly underscores Dobbs' influence on the Wachowski Bros. When Neo realizes his full potential and transforms into The One he steps out of the boundaries of not only visual space but acoustic, kinetic, and tactile space as well. He merges into the mixed corporate-media electric environment itself and becomes "one" with it. By regaining his human body in the first-nature sense, he's able to then flip back into the second nature (the virtual reality program) with full awareness of how he lost his body originally, thus enabling him to gain control over the second nature and destroy the evil homeopathic retrievals who have been sent by the AI program to destroy him and his companions. Though this is not stated, Neo probably doesn't even need a programmer to enter the virtual reality world anymore. He can flip in and out of his body at will. He's the ultimate menippean satirist.

This is a clear allegory for how Bob Dobbs staged his campaign for chairmanship of the Secret Council of Ten. In February of 1988 the Council held an election during which Dobbs rigged the computers so that he would win. He beat out three of his adversaries: Prince Charles, a Russian named Romanov who was ruling the USSR using Gorbachev as a cover, and Prince

Thurn und Taxis. Because he was no longer controlled by the Council, he was able to begin releasing crucial information to the public early in 1988. Unfortunately, he soon discovered that nobody was listening, which is probably why the Cryptocracy hasn't bothered to bump him off. Dobbs is now attempting to make an end-run around the Cryptocracy. In order to persuade people to listen to his message, he's decided he must first persuade them to turn off the media environment. In the early 90s he developed a program known as Media Ecology, the main purpose of which is to encourage a Media Fast.

The following is excerpted from one of Dobbs' flyers distributed by Gerry Fialka's Contemporary Communications Conference:

We are polluting Art as fast as we are tidying up Nature. The people of the Earth are encouraged to engage in an experiment of utmost urgency. We must turn off the electric environment for a period of one week to perform a cleansing of mass-man's mind, body and spirit. We must get back to our bodies, lest we forget they are still there! Imagine the freedom to be experienced as the top-down cultural control of civilization is eradicated for even the briefest period! If everyone did participate in the media Fast, how would we know it happened? Stay tuned...

The paradoxical nature of the last sentence seems to be intentional. Near the end of his final interview on KPFK Dobbs reveals, "We can't turn off TV. This whole agenda I'm proposing is a vain extension of nothing by nothing. But in software/wetware conditions we just have to think about something collectively and it's done. So if we become aware of what my agenda is and think it, it is done." (Interview 9/24/94)

Dobbs' current predicament is exactly the same as that of Neo in the final scene of The Matrix. We see him standing in a telephone booth on a crowded city street, addressing the AI through a pay phone. "I'm going to show everybody what you don't want them to see," he says. "I'm going to show them a world without you."

We see him step out of the phone booth and onto the street, where he is

surrounded by hordes of busy pedestrians on their way to a non-existent job in a non-existent world. Somehow he must convince each of them that they're nothing more than homeopathic retrievals. The film ends as his quest begins.

According to the ancient Hebrew system of the Kabbalah, two words possessing similar numerical ciphers are considered inextricably linked. On a whim, I calculated the Kabbalistic numbers of both "Neo" and "Bob". The results: Neo equals 46, Bob equals 47. The message seems clear: Bob is Neo, Neo is Bob. But Bob's got the edge... by one digit. In the electric environment, of course, sometimes you only need one digit to have the edge.

If the plot of *The Matrix* is true, and Bob is the real life equivalent of Neo, then I suppose it's appropriate that his message would be limited to publications such as this. The AI wouldn't allow such a dangerous message to be spread on a wider basis, now would it? But that doesn't really matter. As Bob himself says (Interview 5/4/95), "since I'm a homeopathic retrieval, I don't need that many followers." One might extrapolate even further: the fewer followers Bob has, the more powerful he becomes.

Endnotes

Bob Dobb's book and CDs are available from: AK Press, PO Box 40682, San Francisco CA 94114. His tape list is available by sending two .37 stamps to: Contemporary Communications Conference, 2427 1/2 Glyndon Ave., Venice CA 90291. Further Bob tapes are available from She Who Remembers at 626-287-8254. Bob's home page is <http://www.posi-tone.com/BOB.html>. He can be e-mailed at purple@ingress.com. Bob has had a regular column in *Flipside* magazine since issue #96 (P.O. Box 60790, Pasadena, CA 91116). He is currently presenting selections from his private diaries under the general title "Android Meme's Xenochrony." The selections extend as far back as the early 1930s and feature conversations with such historically important figures as Reinhard Gehlen, Alexander Haig, Mae Brussell,

Marshall McLuhan, and many others.

In the March/April 1999 Flipside (#117) you'll find a transcribed dialogue between Dobbs and McLuhan that perfectly sums up the basic plot of The Matrix. McLuhan says to Dobbs: "I once wrote an article, 'The Southern Quality.' back in 1946 or 1947 where I explained why there was no human life on this planet. Since then human beings have been grown inside programmed media-environments that are essentially like test tubes. That's why I say the kids today live mythically." (Dobbs, Flipside 38). What's perhaps most amazing is this: the date of the entry is May 2, 1967. McLuhan prefigured the current trend in popular films (David Cronenberg's eXistenZ and Josef Rusnak's The Thirteenth Floor being further extensions of the virtual reality motif) well over thirty years ago, and Dobbs just happened to release the transcribed conversation for an international audience only a few weeks before The Matrix premiered! This is where synchronicity gives way to "xenochrony," an esoteric term best defined simply by reading Bob's on-going column in Flipside.

Phatic Communion With Bob Dobbs is an epyllion (a miniepic) that reads like a postmodern version of the Eddaic Verses, the Old Norse mythological poems that conveyed esoteric religious information through breathless dialogues between the gods. The book consists of "verbal duels" between Lyndon LaRouche and Marshall McLuhan, LaRouche and William Irwin Thompson, LaRouche and Bob Dobbs, Arthur Kroker and Dobbs, then concludes with Dobbs' subsumption of the entire narrative. Oddly enough, the Eddaic poems always ended with the death of one of the interlocutors. In Bob's book, however, all of the interlocutors die except for Bob!