ANG-1066 Final Essay

The Representation of Authority in Pop Culture

Free will seems to be essential for humans’ wellbeing. What does free will really propose? Does it intend to offer, to human beings, a life in which everything is possible? A life in which there is no rules settled and no limits? Are humans morally ready to get hold of the gift of free will? In the movie the Matrix, there is a rebellion against the machines. Allegorically, when it comes to our material world, it could refer to a revolution led by a group of people who want to be free from the authority of the head of state or to be free of all religions. Would it really be a good thing to have mankind succeeding at achieving absolute free will? I shall make use of the movie “The Matrix” to answer that question. Through this essay, I shall question the significance of authority imposed to human beings. I will demonstrate that mankind cannot survive in world without rules, and that the annihilation of free will is proven to be the source of human’s salvation. I shall provide those evidences with the use of two important concepts; the concept of liberium arbitrum and the concept of pelagianism. However, this essay main objective is to prove that free will is essential to humanity’s evolution even if it is most likely going to lead mankind to obliteration. Yet, there is still hope for humanity’s salvation, and it resides in a flaw.

In the Matrix trilogy, the machines govern the world. Mankind is enslaved and is prohibited of free will. The matrix is described as a prison for humans’ mind in which our senses are trapped. Some people succeed at manipulating the matrix and are given back their free will. In this case, free will provides infinite powers such as the ability to fly, superhuman speed and strength, and many other skills. For those people, possessing free will of the mind, the matrix is a simulated reality in which they can do everything they want while their vulnerable body is left in the real world. The real world is the dimension in which mankind has created AI. In this world, mankind has stopped to see God as the supreme creator once it created artificial intelligence. “Welcome.....to the desert of the real...We have only bits and pieces of information, but what we know for certain is that at some point in the early twenty-first century all of mankind was united in celebration. We marvelled at our own magnificence as we gave birth to A.I.” *–Morpheus, The Matrix, 1999.*

Science is the religion’s worst enemy or total opposite. Science gives u power and leads to creation. Without the religion, which imposes a God with supreme power on his creations, a creation becomes a Beast out of control and dangerous for his creator.“Talking against Religion is unchaining a Tyger, the Beast let loose may worry his Deliverer*." -Quote by Benjamin Franklin.* What if the slave becomes the master when it comes to artificial intelligence? Human beings free will has been the source of God’s destruction because mankind was allowed to choose to believe or not in God existence. We have rejected the rules of God in order to satisfy our desires freely. In the Matrix’s movies, it has unfortunately led mankind close to total loss. In what does God, the head of state, or any other form of authority can prevent mankind from total destruction? If we obey to God’s Ten Commandments, to the Constitution of all nations, or to any other set of rules given to protect human beings from getting loss in their desires and weaknesses; then mankind is meant to last forever in a constant perfection. If a being obey perfectly to each commandment given by God, and to each law of the constitution; then this human would probably be considered as perfect. However, if a person would repress all form of desires, only remain faithful to virtues without ever yielding to deadly sins while following those ruthless rules without indicating imperfection at it; then this human could as well be considered as an automate.

**“The first Matrix I designed was quite naturally perfect; it was a work of art - flawless, sublime. A triumph equalled only by its monumental failure. The inevitability of its doom is apparent to me now as a consequence of the imperfection inherent in every human being. Thus, I redesigned it based on your history to more accurately reflect the varying grotesquery of your nature. However, I was again frustrated by failure. I have since come to understand that the answer eluded me because it required a lesser mind or perhaps a mind “less” bound by the parameters of perfection.” *–Architect, The Matrix, 1999.***

**Human nature can never be associated to humanity if it is programmed to be perfect. Men have been given cognitive abilities such as reasoning, abstraction and thoughts, therefore; humans are capable of distinguishing the good from the evil. The fact that they are allowed to choose to be good or evil is attributed to the “liberium arbitrum”. Human nature was never meant to be perfect since it was given a brain to question the laws, and it was also given the choice to follow the rules or not. If free will is removed from humans’ mind, it will result in losing the essence of the nature of mankind itself. Humans will not be any different than programmed robots or mammals. “**Every mammal on this planet instinctively develops a natural equilibrium with the surrounding environment but...you humans do not.” *–Agent Smith, The Matrix, 1999.* Without free will, **humans would not be given the gift of love for they would then be deprived of any form of desire which would abolish their motivation and ambition in this world. They would wander around waiting for an order or a change without any feeling of joy or sadness. It would be the end of mankind evolution for they would only rely on their instinct of survival. To survive is very different from the term to live. When a being is reduced in enduring live, that person becomes a slave of its own environment. Live is the drive that gives you will, and for will to remains alive it requires to be free of authority.**

The role of the State, in people’s life, is to be in management and protect the material being of its citizens. It sets limits on the people regarding the rules established by the Constitution. The role of religion, in the society, is to deal with the eternal order; our eternal salvation. Religion is related ultimately to the kingdom of God and considers itself to protect our moral values. In short, the State represents the protector of humans’ body while religion is meant to protect humans’ soul.Can human beings subsist without those forms of protection? Is it really protection or would it simply be “control”? Does mankind need to be controlled in order to be protected against their abusive tendencies? In the “Matrix” movies, mankind are longing to get rid of authority. Humans are fighting in order to get back their free will. They no longer want to be controlled. “Now, I'm going to hang up this phone, and I'm going to show these people what you don't want them to see. I'm going to show them a world without you... a world without rules and controls, without borders or boundaries. A world... where anything is possible.” *–Neo, The Matrix, 1999.* Let us note that Neo flies off in the sky just as he says those words. It could easily mean that free will gives you wings, that it can also destroy all barriers that keep you away from reaching your dreams and accomplishing your ambitions. By being free of the hand of control and free to choose; human beings are set loose in a world they can now control or abuse.

Can mankind be freed from laws, obligations, and moral values without getting lost in the chaos? Is love strong enough to keep humanity away from the corruption of the mind? Or will pride once more blind mankind into their own magnificence toward their creations? If human beings cannot guide themselves due to their weakness toward pride therefore; humanity need to be controlled by a superior source of authority, whether it is through the head of state or through religion. Many things require a form of control in order to subsist. The earth itself is governed by a set of rules that keeps it under orbit. What would happen to our planet if it was subsisting under no specific rules? At some point in its evolution, it would probably decide to stop turning around itself endlessly. If the globe decides to be free of the set of rules imposed to it, it will be the end for all living creatures on earth for the simple reason that their existence depends on the gravity engendered by the constant circling of the planet. How can we know that the earth does not keep turning in order to preserve life? Perhaps it is its love for us that gives it the drive needed to keep rolling. In the case of planet earth, with all the harm given to it by its children; it has got to be unconditioned love. Unconditioned love has always been challenged by free will. Let us hope that, unlike mankind, the earth and God shall never be given the power to choose.

Free will is needed for humanity in order to keep evolving, but can it lead mankind to a negative evolution, total-destruction, or madness? Human beings have been bragging about their need of freedom and power of will, but have they been living in perfect harmony with those gifts? For my part, I have often been blaming myself for not choosing the right path or not taking the right decision, and I strongly believe that my main ambition is to live a perfect life in a perfect world. Often, I have been struggling with the power of free will. A good example would be when I wish I could program myself in order to lose weight. Every now and then, I want to be rid of my free will when it comes to choosing to go to the gym or not, to choosing to eat a dessert or not. Instead, I would rather be controlled by a superior force which would make me do the right thing. Free will is like a constant temptation that gives you the choice to be good or not. Free will is what the bible calls “temptation” or evil. When Eve has yielded to the temptation of consuming the fruit of knowledge in the Garden of Eden, it has given mankind the choice to follow the rules of God or not, and this power of choice has led humanity to damnation. The perfect world we have been longing for shall never exist as long as there will be potential sinners within the human race; and potential sinners will always exist as long as mankind will be given the knowledge of good and evil. This knowledge is what makes us human therefore; it is impossible for human to build a perfect world in which he is free.

Now that we have considered the concept of “liberium arbitrum” to relate to the importance of an authority for mankind preservation, I shall introduce the concept of pelagianism in order to counteract the previous statement which suppose that humanity requires a form of authority in order to be saved from destruction. The palagianism theory stipulates that the original sin (the achievement of the knowledge of good and evil) did not corrupt the nature of mankind. It says that human beings are still capable of choosing between good or evil without divine interventions or upper authorities. Pelagianism’s theorists believe that humans are not born into sin; they are born into a sinful world. It means that human beings become sinners as soon as they are given the choice to choose or more accurately; when they reach the age of reason. They also believe that Jesus Christ has been sent to humankind as redemption for mankind’s sins. Jesus Christ is considered to be the Tree of Life which is believed to have the power to connect all forms of creation in a whole. It is apart from sins or virtues since it is the marriage of both. It is free of rules since it makes all possibilities along with impossibilities merge into a perfect harmony.

In the movies called “The Matrix”, there is a special being often referred as “The One”. “**Your life is the sum of a remainder of an unbalanced equation inherent to the programming of the Matrix. You are the eventuality of an anomaly, which, despite my sincerest efforts, I have been unable to eliminate from what is otherwise a harmony of mathematical precision.” *–The Architect, The Matrix, 1999.* The chosen is named Neo. He is believed to be the one who will end the war between the men and the machines. In the end of the movie, we understand that the greatest threat is coming from the opposite of what Neo is. The one who longs for war and destruction is named Agent Smith. “**He is you; your opposite, your negative, the result of the equation trying to balance itself out. One way or another, Neo, this war is going to end. Tonight, the future of both worlds will be in your hands... or in his.” *– the Oracle, The Matrix, 1999.* In the end of the movie, there is one final battle between Neo and Smith; good and evil. Instead of destroying Smith, Neo decides to connect with him which results in the destruction of both of them. Neo has given to the authority (the machines) a protection against destruction; in exchange, the machines has kept the promise to remain in peace with humanity.

To conclude, just as the Oracle said in the movies: “Everything that has a beginning has an end.” In order to bring back balance into things, we have got to unite it with its opposite. Unfortunately, I do not hold the answer whether if mankind shall meet with his saviour in order to find a way to subsist in a world in which they can be free to choose without destroying it. However, I like to think that the answer is simple and resides in every human being’s heart; it is sacrifice. Be your own saviour; try to find a way to sacrifice your desires in order to fulfill the earth’s needs for it to survive. Try to make the worse of yourself become the best of yourself, and you shall become able to control yourself. If mankind wants to live without an exterior authority to control their actions; human beings have got to rely on an interior authority and control themselves by their own will.