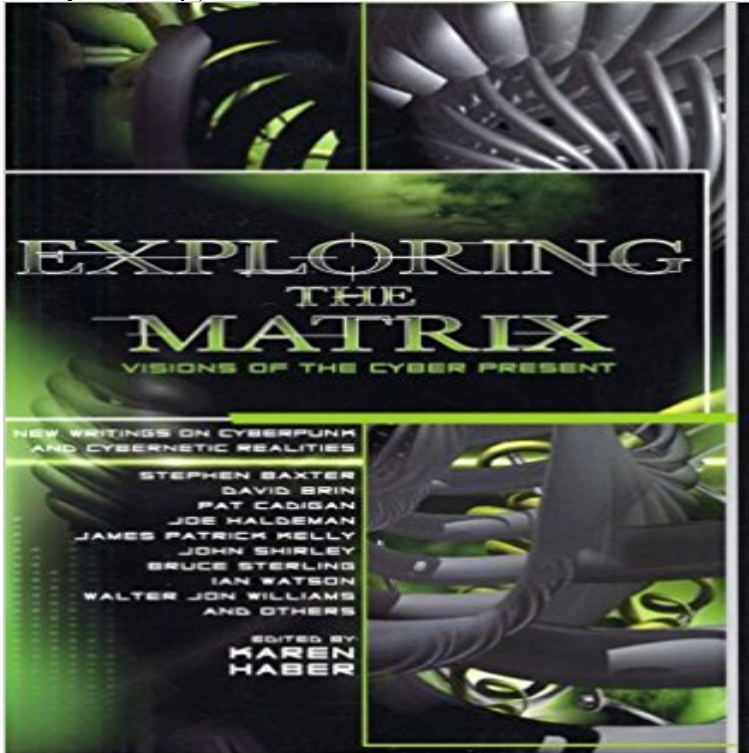


## Exploring the Matrix: Visions of the Cyber Present



It is the beginning of the twenty-first century, and we are living on the cusp of change. Reality has already spawned one alternate state, and for many people virtual reality is now where they are most at home.

But what happens when virtual worlds become indistinguishable from what we consider to be the real world? When you wake up from a dream, how do you know that you are not still dreaming? And if the reality were in is virtual, who is doing the programming? These questions, and many more like them, spin effortlessly out of the box-office mega-hit *The Matrix*. More than just a computer-aided shoot-em-up, more than just the latest cinematic expression of cyberpunk angst, *The Matrix* presented layer upon layer of challenging explorations of what the true nature of reality might be, and why this should (or should not) be important to us. *Exploring the Matrix* presents eighteen thoughtful and thought-provoking essays on what the film had to say and exactly how it was said. Here you will discover the long and fascinating history of some of the themes set forth in the Wachowski Brothers landmark film, why they are important, how they have been explored in the past, and their implications for the immediate future of human society. The true nature of reality in our current cyber-age is not a rhetorical question, but rather one that needs to be answered as we move closer to seamless virtual scenarios, accessible online, in video games... and perhaps ultimately as the result of uploading software to an implanted chip in the brain. You can take the blue pill and stay in the dream, unaware of your status, or take the red pill and see just how deep the rabbit hole goes.

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