

Plato's Cave in *the Matrix*: Fusing Philosophy and Cinema

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In the past few decades, the use of creative arts as a mode of representation to surpass the mundane and present the extraordinary had led to the intervention of popular culture – cinema in particular – into the field of philosophy. *The Matrix* (1999) directed by the Wachowskis is a prime example of a film that had successfully incorporated philosophical concepts into a film generally classified as science fiction by film critics. However, upon scrutiny, it is evident that the premise of this motion picture bears a distinct resemblance to the precepts discussed in the ‘allegory of the cave’ expounded by Plato nearly 2400 years earlier in his celebrated work the *Republic*. Based on Plato’s cave and the narrative of *The Matrix*, the objective of this research is to critically examine whether film can be considered an effective medium to convey Platonic thought. The methodology used in this study is the comparative appraisal of Platonic notions discoursed in the allegory of the cave and the depiction of the same precepts in *The Matrix*, taking into consideration the opinions of film critics and scholars. Accordingly, this study examines how diligently the storyline of *The Matrix* follows the principles illustrated in Plato’s cave in order to determine the degree of success through which the film had expressed Platonic thought, rendering philosophy accessible to a wider audience.

Keywords: Allegory of the cave; cinema; platonic philosophy; popular culture