

Ideas from plato's ontology in the matrix

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



The Wachowski brothers wrote and directed the movie The Matrix. These brothers write about a very complex world that is unparalleled to anything our minds can grasp through mere thought. That is the purpose of the characters portrayed throughout the movie. Thomas Anderson, Neo, is a very distraught man. He knows there is something more to the world he senses, but he cannot quite get there without the help of others that once struggled this same battle his is internally struggling. That is where two of our other characters come into play, Morpheus and Trinity. The context of this report is to explain the symbolism of this graphic novel, as well as transcribe my interpretations of the plot. The bulk of this paper will be spent talking about the overall use of Plato's Ontology throughout, while we talk about other interpretations I picked up that I believe relate to other aspects of class discussions.

Plato basis his ontology on the idea of a bifurcated reality, one that is divided, but can have elements seep through to both sides. Plato also believes reality is mental, which is portrayed through Neo, Morpheus, and Trinity. The matrix is a made up reality, designed by AIs to allow humans to think they are living in a world they are most accustomed to, while in truth they are being grown and harvested in pods for the machine's energy, and are not actually living at all. When Morpheus and Trinity pull Neo out of the Matrix and into reality, Neo gets his first sense of reality is truly mental. Once he gains his strength they allow him to begin training, this is where Morpheus convinces Neo that in the world, we are only limited by our interpretations of ourselves. During this training process, Neo essentially crosses over from Plato's realm of shadows to the other side of the

bifurcated reality, the realm of ideas, knowledge, and being. The process of realization is through what Plato called dialectic and maieutic (mid-wife). The education process is one of talking with others, and questioning reality. Your senses may be inaccurate, so through dialogue with another person, you may be enlightened. If you pay close attention to the dialogue between characters, it really gives insight to the mind of the Wachowski brothers. In one scene, Morpheus tells Neo, "The body cannot live without the mind". This is pulled from Plato's ontology that one must have aspects of both sides of bifurcated reality until one is able to move completely to the side of idea or knowledge.

Plato writes The Allegory of the Cave. In short, it symbolizes the process of enlightenment. Individuals are chained down so tightly in a cave that all they can see in front of them are shadows, which are being illuminated by 'the light', but they do not have any understanding of the light yet through because they are not questioning the reality they are given yet. Just like in The Matrix, to understand true reality, you must be shown the light by someone that has already been introduced to the light. That is what Morpheus does to Neo. He cannot give him ideas or tell him right from wrong, rather he asks him questions that allow Neo to interpret the world for what it is, a mental reality. If you watch the movie in its entirety, you will hear Neo on the phone, in the Matrix talking to someone that we can presume he is about to attempt to enlighten. This dialogue is beautiful because Dr. Putt talks about once you make it to the light, outside the cave, you must go back in so you can help others out and learn the truth, exactly what Neo does at the end of the movie.

Socrates has a story in Meno that illustrates the idea that we come from a soul, enter a body, die, and return to that soul. He during our time in the body, is our time of remembrance. Socrates does not think people are taught while they are on Earth, but rather they are being pried and probed to remember aspects of the world. Hence the phrase, " Oh, I remember that". Throughout Neo's time in the matrix, he has felt something was wrong. He just hasn't been able to figure out what exactly. I interpret that as we must have known something previously to be able to determine something doesn't feel right. How can we feel right and wrong without having some previous knowledge or experience with it?

Although it was talked about mostly in the last section, this movie reeks of the ' erotic drive'. Within five minutes of the movie beginning, Trinity tells Neo, " The world doesn't drive you mad, the question drives you mad!" That is the erotic drive pulling on Neo. He seeks knowledge and growth. These things pull him into the light that will in turn move him from the shadows to the light (ideas), with the help of Morpheus. I found the scene of Neo breaking out of his pod very symbolic. I took that as him beginning his journey of dialogue from the shadows to the light.

On a smaller note, I noticed one of the characters that stayed on the ship had a very different mindset then the rest. Cypher, the bald man with the goatee, was very against the idea of enlightenment. He truly believed all of the realities and problems that came with the real world were not worth transforming to the side of knowledge. That's why he worked the deal out with Agent Smith to get him Morpheus. Cypher wanted to return to the

matrix with a wiped mind, an open book. He even went as far as to say, "Ignorance is bliss". That troubles the viewer because it raises the idea that we cannot handle the truth. We have been given a fabricated reality so that we do not overstep our bounds on our way back from the body and soul to just the soul.

The Matrix portrays what we have been talking about in class very well. As if the Wachowski brothers wrote it with Plato's Ontology in mind. I have seen this movie a couple other times, but I have never put this much interpretation into it. I generally take it for what it is worth. It makes me believe I need to dive deeper into all things I invest my time into. When movies like this are over, you sit and think about life. When I finished this movie, I asked myself, "Red or Blue?" Would I be able to break away from normality and risk myself on the option of finding myself? Would you choose knowledge or perception?