

*“Observations on the nature of truth and reality in the myth of Plato’s cave and the matrix”*

Is everything that we see in everyday of our life the reality of our world, or are we manipulated to see another fake and distorted reality? Are we, human beings controlled by puppet-handlers and are we hidden from the real truth of our world? Plato’s Allegory of the Cave and the movie The Matrix are both stories which explore this concept, the fact that people are really unaware of reality, of truth. Both stories have parallels about what truth and reality are and what will happen to the one who discovers them.

All along the story of matrix, the main question which seems to be appearing is what is reality? The matrix itself is a computer generated program which is controlling every human being who lives in the matrix. However, the people who are controlled have no idea that they are just puppets, and they think that what they see is the reality, the truth. Feelings such as pain, taste, smell are all generated from the human’s minds which are controlled by the matrix. The humans live in a lie while thinking everything is true. In the matrix, it is said that “reality is perceived through electrical impulses created by your senses”. The premise of the matrix is that reality is actually just an illusion perpetuated by the artificial intelligence which rules the world and lives of human bio-electricity.

In Plato’s cave, the people inside have always known one way of life, and therefore not realizing they are just slaves see their life as the only reality, the only truth. Their view of reality is solely based upon this limited view of the cave. The prisoners do not realize that they are being controlled and that they are being held as captives since this existence is all they have ever known. Their reality is limited but they think it is normal and that this is how they should be living.

When Neo first awakes and escapes from the slime pod, he asks why his eyes are sore and he is told that he has never really used them before as he has never seen reality. He never used his eyes as when he was in the matrix, his mind showed him the images he needed to see, but he did not see them through his own eyes. Soon after he awakes, he realizes that he can never go back to living the way he did, in the false reality, the matrix.

“Once you have seen through the illusion of perceived reality you can never go back to living the lie.” Plato says that the achievements in the illusory world are no longer desirable to the one who

sees beyond the world. Once Neo and the man who escapes the cave are no longer in the matrix and the cave have understood that they were not in the reality but in an illusion, then they will be able to awaken special powers; such as Neo dodging bullets but however, the man from the cave wishes to return to the cave, maybe because he misses his old life even though he has found out the truth.

The movie The Matrix parallels Plato's cave in a number of ways. Similar to the prisoners of the cave, the humans trapped in the matrix only see what the machines want them to see, just like the puppet-handles in Plato's cave. They are tricked into believing that what they hear in the cave and see before them is the true reality that exists. Furthermore they accept what their senses are telling them and they believe that what they are experiencing is all that really exists.

On the other hand, once the one who escapes the matrix or the cave, he will be forced to face a painful truth, the truth that he had lived in a virtual reality and that he had no idea what true reality was. The shadows in both stories play a crucial role in shaping the prisoner's view of the world. It is the shadows that serve as the basis for the prisoners' false sense of reality.

In the cave, the prisoners perceive the illusory world with the shadows on the wall with one's senses. But in the film of The Matrix the people do not even use one's senses at all until one person leaves the matrix as Neo says his eyes hurt. While one is in the matrix, Morpheus says that images are fed directly into the brain. This is a difference between the sense of reality in the matrix and in the cave. While the cave represents the illusory physical world, the matrix represents an illusory world, entirely non-physical, it is a computer program. Plato's cave and the matrix however utilize the same theory, both stories contain unrevealed reality, fake truth and only a very few, Neo, can see them. Once one will see the reality, it will be too hard to come back to live the lie and will have to face the consequences although the man returns to the cave. The matrix and the cave suggest that knowing true reality is the key. However another view of the matter would be that would it be better living in the fake reality and truth and think you will live happily rather than open your eyes and see what reality is and have a less attractive life from then onwards? Is virtual reality better than true reality?