

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# Allegory of the Matrix

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From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

Plato's allegory of the cave is perhaps the best-known of his many metaphors, allegories, and myths.

The allegory is told and interpreted at the beginning of Book VII of *The Republic* (514a-520a). The allegory is probably best presented as a story, and then interpreted--as Plato himself does.

### ***The Allegory***

Imagine prisoners chained since childhood deep inside a cave. Not only are their limbs immobilized by the chains, their heads are as well so that their eyes are fixed on a wall. Behind the prisoners is an enormous fire, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way, along which men carry shapes of various animals, plants, and other things. The shapes cast shadows on the wall, which occupy the prisoners' attention. Also, when one of the shape-carriers speaks, an echo against the wall causes the prisoners to believe that the words come from the shadows. The prisoners engage in what appears to us to be a game--naming the shapes as they come by. This, however, is the only reality that they know, even though they are seeing merely shadows of images.

Suppose a prisoner is released and compelled to stand up and turn around. His eyes will be blinded by the firelight, and the shapes passing will appear less real than their shadows. Similarly, if he is dragged up out of the cave into the sunlight, his eyes will be so blinded that he will not be able to see anything. At first, he will be able to see darker shapes such as shadows, and only later brighter and brighter objects. The last object he would be able to see is the sun, which, in time, he would learn to see as that

this it is that provides the seasons and the courses of the year and presides over all things in the visible region, and is in some sort the cause of all these things that they had seen. (*The Republic* bk. VII, 516b-c; trans. Paul Shorey)

Once thus enlightened, so to speak, the freed prisoner would no doubt want to return to the cave to free "his fellow bondsmen." The problem however is that they would not want to be freed: descending back into the cave would require that the freed prisoner's eyes adjust again, and for a time, he would be inferior at the ludicrous process of identifying shapes on the wall. This would make his fellow prisoners murderous toward anyone who attempted to free them.

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### The Matrix

The movie, "The Matrix," parallels Plato's Allegory Of The Cave what ways?

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How are the prisoners of the cave similar to the, the humans trapped in the matrix (the cave)?

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How are they are tricked into believing that what they hear in the cave and see before them is the true reality that exists?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Why do they accept what their senses are telling them and why do they believe that what they are experiencing is all that really exists?

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What painful truth is Neo is forced to face, when he is removed from the pod that has kept him trapped in the virtual reality of the matrix?

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What does Neo discover about his life? What does he discover are the shadows of the truth?

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# The Puppet-Handlers

Who are the puppet-handlers, as Plato calls them? How doe the handler use artificial surroundings as a way to control and manipulate the information that the prisoners receive?

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While the prisoners are being fooled and influenced by the false reality presented to them, In what ways are the puppet-handlers, to some extent, being fooled?

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What human emotions does Agents Smith start to show? What do you think that means?

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## The Shadows

What crucial role do the shadows play in shaping the prisoners' view the world?

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Why do you think repetitive use of mirrors and reflected images used in the movie?

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In "The Matrix," how do the machines use "shadows" (series of code which together make up the matrix world) to occupy the humans and keep them under their control?

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## The Freed Man

In "Allegory of The Cave," what does Plato say about the prisoner that is eventually be released or escape from his chains and the cave?

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What would the Freedman be able to see?

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What do you think Cypher meant when he tells Trinity, "I think the matrix can be more real than this world."?

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Do you think that if the prisoners really wanted to escape from the cave, they could do so by simply willing themselves to get up and walk out? Why or why not?

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How is Neo is portrayed ? As Morpheus tells Neo, "You're here because you know something. What you know you can't explain. But you feel it. You've felt it your entire life. That there's something wrong with the world. You don't know what it is but it's there, like a splinter in your mind driving you mad. It is this feeling that has brought you to me."

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# Freedom From The Cave



Why does Morpheus tell Neo while the two of them sitting down to chat that, "Unfortunately, no one can be told what the matrix is. You have to see it for yourself."?

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What did Morpheus mean when he tells Neo the same thing in regard to the humans still plugged or trapped in the world of the matrix. "You have to understand, most of these people are not ready to be unplugged. And many of them are so inert, so hopelessly dependent on the system that they will fight to protect it." ?

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## Society's Role In Our Lives

In conclusion, Plato's story of the cave brings up many philosophical points and most importantly, addresses the issue of society's role in our lives. To some degree, we are all influenced by the thoughts and actions of others; however, at the same time, we have the ability to question, draw our own conclusions, and ultimately make our own choices.

What doe Trinity mean when she tells Neo, "The Matrix can not tell you who you are." ?

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In what ways are you the freed man? In what ways might you be a captive in the cave?

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What responsibilities doe the Freed Man/ Neo have to his fellow bondsmen? Why?

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Name anyone in history that this story might apply to. Why?

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