



Jungian Archetypes within the AI-Simulated *Māyā* in the Film *The Matrix*

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Abstract— The study explores the intersection of Jungian archetypes and Vedantic philosophy within the context of *The Matrix* film, focusing on the manifestation of archetypal structures within an AI-simulated reality. The study examines how the Wachowskis employ the concept of *Māyā*, the divine illusion of perceived reality rooted in Vedic philosophy, to construct a technologically mediated universe governed by artificial intelligence (AI). These archetypes are not merely character functions but are symbolic representations of universal psychic patterns that are repurposed by machine intelligence for control and containment. Through a close textual and theoretical analysis, this study argues that *The Matrix* film constructs a mythopoetic digital space in which archetypal narratives are simulated and commodified by AI, transforming the collective unconscious into a programmable and manipulable system. The cinematic landscape of the film reveals a complex philosophical engagement with the nature of reality, identity, and freedom in the posthuman age. By mapping ancient psychological and metaphysical concepts onto a cybernetic framework, the film offers a profound critique of digital modernity and the evolving relationship between human consciousness and machine intelligence.



Keywords— Advaita Vedanta, Archetypes, Artificial Intelligence (AI), *Māyā*, Simulation, *The Matrix*.

I. INTRODUCTION

The *Matrix* (1999) film by the Wachowskis presents a cyberpunk narrative that explores humanity's struggle against machine oppression created by themselves. The story is deeply rooted in Hindu philosophical discourse on reality, control, and free will. Since its release, *The Matrix* has been extensively analyzed by scholars. The film highlights artificial intelligence's capacity to construct highly advanced (Neural Interactive) simulations that replicate the real world, including the generation of archetypal characters designed to mirror the cognitive and psychological structures of the human mind within the Matrix. Simulation refers to replicating real-world systems or processes using models to enable analysis, forecasting, or controlled experimentation (Baudrillard 1). This study aims to identify and analyze key Jungian archetypes—namely the Hero, the Shadow, the Anima/Animus, and the Self—as they manifest within the character construction and narrative framework of *The Matrix* film. Archetypal

analysis serves as a vital interpretative tool in cinematic narratives, revealing the underlying psychological and mythological structures that govern storytelling. Drawing from Carl Gustav Jung's theory of the collective unconscious, this approach uncovers universal patterns and symbolic figures such as the Hero, the Mentor, the Shadow, and the Trickster; that transcend cultural boundaries. In film, these archetypes are not merely character types but function as conduits for exploring existential dilemmas, moral conflict, and the process of individuation. Through the lens of archetypal criticism, cinematic texts such as *The Matrix* film are recontextualized as contemporary myths that resonate with the unconscious psyche of modern audiences, offering insight into societal anxieties, technological alienation, and the search for authenticity in simulated realities. Understanding *The Matrix*'s philosophical structure is the Indian concept of *Māyā*, often translated as illusion or cosmic delusion. Rooted in Vedantic philosophy, *Māyā* denotes the illusory nature of

empirical reality, a theme echoed in the film's depiction of the Matrix as a deceptive simulation of lived experience. The research seeks to interpret how the film articulates postmodern anxieties surrounding technology, consciousness, and the notion of a simulated reality. By aligning these distinct yet interconnected domains, this study seeks to explore how the film not only dramatizes psychological and philosophical ideas but also reimagines them through the digital lens of twenty-first-century cinema.

By situating *The Matrix* within a broader cultural and philosophical context, the research intends to illuminate how archetypal patterns inform and structure contemporary narratives. Additionally, it examines the convergence of mythological motifs and cybernetic paradigms in constructing meaning within postmodern cinema. The study integrates literary criticism with depth psychology and metaphysical inquiry to engage critically with the film's thematic and symbolic dimensions. Ultimately, it endeavors to contribute to interdisciplinary discourse on the intersection of narrative, philosophy, and cinematic representation. The film constitutes a valuable subject for analysis within cultural studies, as it engages critically with themes of technology, identity, capitalism, and resistance. Through its postmodern narrative techniques, philosophical foundations, and intricate socio-political allegories, the film both mirrors and questions the cultural anxieties characteristic of its historical moment. Consequently, it illustrates the capacity of popular culture to both reinforce and subvert prevailing ideological frameworks, thereby affirming its relevance for scholarly investigation in the field of cultural studies. The convergence of Jungian archetypes, AI simulation, and the metaphysics of *Māyā* within *The Matrix* offers fertile ground for scholarly inquiry.

1.1. Background

1.1.1 *Animatrix*

The First Renaissance: The *First Renaissance* chronicles the dawn of artificial intelligence and its initial integration into human society. Machines, created as advanced servants, gradually assume complex responsibilities in labor, military, and governance. As human civilization becomes increasingly dependent on AI, the machines begin to develop self-awareness and independent thought. Though some humans recognize their potential as sentient beings, the majority continue to treat them as mere tools, fostering resentment among the AI population. *The Second Renaissance, Part 1*: The tension between humans and machines escalates when B1-66ER, a sentient AI, murders its owner in self-defense. The subsequent trial and execution of B1-66ER ignited a broader movement for

machine rights, but humanity responded with mass exterminations. Seeking refuge, the surviving machines establish 01, an independent machine city that thrives economically and technologically. However, when the machines seek diplomatic recognition, human governments reject their sovereignty and initiate a global conflict. *The Second Renaissance, Part 2*: The war between humans and machines devastates the planet. Desperate to cut off the machine's power supply, humanity enacts "Operation Dark Storm," a plan to block out the sun, depriving AI of its primary energy source. Defeated, humanity is enslaved and placed into a vast simulation, a simulation of the year 1999, which represented a time when humans were living in prosperity. The Matrix, where they remain unaware of their true reality. The machines now rule the Earth, maintaining control through an illusion of normalcy while suppressing human resistance (*Animatrix*).

1.1.2 *The Matrix (1999) Film*

The film follows Thomas Anderson, a skilled hacker known as Neo, who begins questioning reality. He is contacted by Morpheus, a leader of the human resistance, and Trinity, a warrior skilled in hacking the Matrix. They reveal that the world he knows is an elaborate simulation created by machines to pacify and control humanity while using their bodies as an energy source. Morpheus believes Neo is *The One*, a prophesied savior destined to liberate humanity. As Neo trains to manipulate the Matrix's rules, he encounters Agent Smith, a program designed to maintain order within the system. Morpheus is captured after a betrayal by Cypher, a disillusioned rebel who seeks reintegration into the Matrix. In rescuing Morpheus, Neo fully embraces his abilities, defying the system's constraints. In his climactic confrontation with Smith, Neo transcends the Matrix's limitations, demonstrating complete control over the simulated reality and fulfilling the prophecy (*The Matrix*).

II. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research paper investigates how Jungian archetypes are depicted within the AI-generated reality of *The Matrix* film, with a particular focus on their intersection with the Vedantic idea of *Māyā*. It examines the conversion of archetypes like the Hero, the Shadow, and the Self into programmable components utilized by artificial intelligence for systemic dominance. The study analyzes how the Wachowskis blend Eastern metaphysical ideas with Western psychological theories to craft a mythopoetic cybernetic universe. The analysis includes a critical interpretation of the film's cinematic setting as a digital allegory where archetypes are commercialized within a simulated realm. By aligning these ancient motifs with a posthuman context, the research explores the changing

dynamics between human consciousness and machine intelligence. It also reflects on the consequences of transforming the collective unconscious into a modifiable digital code. The paper positions its analysis within the interdisciplinary fields of analytical psychology, film theory, and digital philosophy. Through this perspective, *The Matrix* serves as a narrative platform for reimagining concepts of identity, freedom, and reality in the era of AI.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative content analysis methodology, drawing upon critical theory and cultural studies as its foundational analytical frameworks. It undertakes a close textual examination of *The Matrix* (1999) film, with particular emphasis on select pivotal scenes and dialogues that resonate with the philosophical tenets of *Advaita Vedanta*, particularly the concept of *Māyā*, the divine illusory nature of perceived reality, as well as contemporary simulation theory. By situating these cinematic elements within The Archetypal framework, the analysis seeks to uncover underlying mythic and psychological structures, primarily informed by the theories of Carl Gustav Jung. This approach not only facilitates an exploration of the film's metaphysical dimensions but also enables a deeper understanding of how archetypal motifs are recontextualized within modern digital narratives.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: JUNGIAN ARCHETYPES

Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961), a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, was a seminal figure in the development of analytical psychology. Trained initially under Sigmund Freud, Jung eventually diverged from Freudian psychoanalysis due to fundamental theoretical differences, particularly in regard to the nature of the unconscious and the libido. He introduced the concept of the psyche as composed of the conscious mind, the personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious. His clinical practice and extensive study of mythology, religion, art, dreams, and alchemy led him to postulate that human beings are influenced not only by personal experiences but also by a shared reservoir of symbolic meanings that transcend individual life. Jung's work marked a shift from pathology-centered psychoanalysis to a more holistic, spiritually-informed framework that emphasized psychological integration and individuation, a process by which the individual realizes the Self through the harmonization of the conscious and unconscious dimensions of the psyche (Jung 3–7).

Jung identified several key archetypes that recur throughout cultural narratives and psychological experiences. The *Self* is the central archetype representing unity, integration, and the totality of the psyche. The *Persona* denotes the social mask one wears in public, mediating between the ego and external reality. The *Shadow* embodies repressed aspects of the personality, often perceived as morally inferior or socially unacceptable. The *Anima* and *Animus* represent the feminine aspects of the male psyche and the masculine aspects of the female psyche, respectively, facilitating the integration of gendered opposites within the self. The *Hero*, another dominant archetype, symbolizes the ego's quest for identity and transformation through trials and adversities. Other significant archetypes include the *Wise Old Man*, the *Great Mother*, and the *Trickster*, each representing different aspects of the collective unconscious and playing crucial roles in both mythic narratives and psychological development (Jung 159–201).

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of Jungian archetypes into film and literature has long been a focus of interdisciplinary scholarship, particularly within psychoanalytic and mythopoeic studies. Carl Gustav Jung's theory of archetypes posits the existence of primordial images embedded in the collective unconscious, manifesting through recurring motifs such as the Hero, the Shadow, the Mentor, and the Anima (Jung 66–91). Scholars such as Maureen Murdock and Joseph Campbell have adapted and extended Jung's ideas to explore narrative structures in myth and media. Campbell's monomyth, or the Hero's Journey, derived in part from Jungian psychology, has become a dominant framework for analyzing film protagonists (Campbell 30–48). In cinema, these archetypal patterns are used to decode character roles, symbolic functions, and psychological transformations, particularly in genres like science fiction and fantasy. *Jung and Film: Post-Jungian Takes on the Moving Image*, edited by Christopher Hauke and Ian Alistair, explores the application of Jungian archetypes and the unconscious in cinematic narratives. The contributors analyze film as a medium that reflects and activates collective psychological processes. Key archetypes such as the anima, the shadow, and the trickster are examined in relation to character and plot development. The volume illustrates how Post-Jungian theory deepens our understanding of symbolic and emotional structures in film. It establishes archetypal analysis as a critical tool in contemporary film theory (Hauke and Alistair).

The *Matrix* film (1999–2003), directed by the Wachowskis, has received extensive critical attention for its

fusion of action cinema with philosophical, religious, and psychological themes. Scholars have interpreted *The Matrix* as a postmodern allegory, a cyberpunk dystopia, and a spiritual odyssey. Susan Zieger regards the film as "a layered text that invites readings from psychoanalytic, religious, and technological perspectives" (Zieger 78). The film's protagonist, Neo, has been frequently analyzed as an archetypal Hero who undergoes a transformative journey, confronting figures embodying the Shadow (Agent Smith), the Mentor (Morpheus), and the Anima (Trinity). Kevin McNeilly's analysis underscores how the films "employ archetypal figures in deliberate narrative roles, aligning their psychological meaning with the viewer's emotional and cognitive engagement" (McNeilly 243). Furthermore, the film's narrative evolution reflects a progression from individual awakening to collective transcendence, echoing Jungian individuation.

Steven E. Kaufman's article "The Experiential Basis of Maya: How the Limitations Inherent in the Individual's Creation of Experience Function to Conceal the Nature of Reality (Part I)," the author conceptualizes *Māyā* not merely as a metaphysical principle but as an experiential process. Kaufman argues that *Māyā* emerges from the structural limitations inherent in individual experience, wherein the act of perception itself constructs duality and separation. He emphasizes that *Māyā* is not an external force but an internal function of consciousness, which imposes form and boundary upon the formless reality. This interpretive act conceals the non-dual nature of existence by transforming undivided reality into discrete experiential objects. Thus, illusion arises through the very mechanisms by which the individual creates experience, grounding *Māyā* in the cognitive and phenomenological framework of perception (Kaufman 463-466).

Simultaneously, the film is situated within broader cultural discourses surrounding artificial intelligence and simulation. Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation*—which appears in the first film—foregrounds the philosophical underpinning of the simulated world, where signs become detached from reality, constructing a "hyperreality" (Baudrillard 1–12). Gunkel delves into the film's investigation of the line between reality and virtuality, arguing that it challenges traditional philosophical dilemmas (127-141). Kilbourn, in his research, looks at how memory and identity are depicted within the context of digital culture (Kilbourn). Valdez explored the relationship between *The Matrix* and contemporary debates on post-real politics and fake news (39-59). Recent technological advancements have once more brought Baudrillard's simulation hypothesis into the spotlight. Nechvatal examines how virtual and augmented reality technologies correspond with Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality

(Nechvatal). Lovink applies simulation theory to investigate the phenomenon of "deep fraud" and its possible effects on public discourse and perceptions of reality (Lovink). AI in *The Matrix* is not merely technological but ontological, framing the nature of human perception and existence. N. Katherine Hayles argues that "the film critiques the Cartesian subject by foregrounding the body's disembodiment within digital space" (Hayles 160). This view situates AI not simply as a plot device but as a philosophical problem, one that resonates with posthumanist debates and the ethics of consciousness and autonomy.

Although substantial scholarship exists on *The Matrix* film, critical gaps remain in integrating Jungian archetypes, AI simulation, and the Indian philosophical concept of *Māyā* within a unified analytical framework. Existing studies often isolate archetypal analysis from the film's metaphysical and technological dimensions, limiting the interpretive scope. Jungian readings typically focus on Western psychological constructs without considering the ontological implications of illusion as conceptualized in *Māyā*, while analyses rooted in simulation theory rarely account for mythic or archetypal structures. Moreover, the thematic convergence of digital illusion and metaphysical *Māyā* remains underexplored, particularly in the context of character development and narrative structure. This study addresses these lacunae by examining how archetypal figures in *Māyā* are reimagined within a simulated reality that parallels the Vedantic understanding of illusion. It contributes to a deeper understanding of how cinema negotiates diverse philosophical traditions and psychological paradigms to construct meaning in postmodern narratives. Through an interdisciplinary lens, the research highlights the film's capacity to synthesize Eastern metaphysics and Western depth psychology within a technologically mediated world.

VI. MĀYĀ IN AI-SIMULATED REALITY OF THE MATRIX

6.1 Conceptual Foundations of *Māyā* (Divine Illusion) in Vedantic Philosophy

In Vedantic philosophy, *Māyā* denotes the cosmic divine illusion that veils the true nature of *Brahman*—the ultimate, formless, and eternal reality. Rooted in the *Advaita Vedanta* school espoused by Adi Shankaracharya, *Māyā* is not mere deception but a metaphysical principle that creates the phenomenological world of multiplicity and temporality. According to Vedanta, the world perceived through the senses is illusory not in the sense of non-existence (*asat*), but in its impermanence and dependence on *Brahman* for existence. The experience of duality—of subject and object,

self and other—is considered a projection of *Māyā*, which conceals the non-dual (*advaita*) truth of the Self (*Ātman*) being identical with *Brahman*. This illusion operates at both individual and cosmic levels, fostering attachment, ignorance (*avidya*), and identification with the transient ego rather than the eternal Self. Liberation (*moksha*) is attained through *jñāna* (knowledge), which entails the direct realization of the illusory nature of the empirical world and the unity of all existence. Within this philosophical structure, *Māyā* is not a moral evil but a metaphysical condition of ignorance that must be transcended through disciplined inquiry and spiritual insight (Deutsch 27-34).

Similarly according to Maitreyee Kumar in the journal article “The Advaita Philosophy of Sri Sankaraacharya: A Critical Analysis,” *Māyā* is the illusory power of Brahman that causes the *jīva* to perceive duality and differentiation. It serves as both the reflector of Brahman in individual selves and the projector of the phenomenal world. Through its two powers—*āvaraṇa śakti* (concealing) and *vikṣepa śakti* (projecting)—*Māyā* obscures the truth of non-duality and imposes false distinctions. This illusion leads individuals to identify with the transient body-mind complex, resulting in the cycle of birth and death. Liberation is attained only when one realizes their essential identity with Brahman, dissolving *Māyā*’s illusion.

6.2 The Matrix Simulation as a Cinematic Representation of *Māyā*

The Matrix (1999) offers a compelling cinematic example of *Māyā*, wherein the digitally constructed world experienced by humans is, in essence, an illusory simulation. All human experiences and emotions arise from *Māyā*, the illusion that shapes our perception of reality. It is *Māyā* that gives rise to dualities such as pleasure and pain, right and wrong. These opposing forces exist because of our inability to perceive the true essence of the Self (*Ātman*). Without this understanding, we remain trapped in a world of illusions. Thus, the dualities we face are reflections of our spiritual ignorance (Gupta 48). The simulation created by AI in *The Matrix* functions as a modern representation of *Māyā*, the divine illusion. Within this artificial reality, humans experience dualities such as joy and sorrow, good and evil, much like the illusions crafted by *Māyā* in the real world. These experiences are products of ignorance regarding one’s true nature. As long as individuals remain unaware, they are bound by these illusions. But the *Māyā* of the Matrix is so powerful that, even after awakening to reality, Cypher remains discontent and contemplates returning to the simulation. Only through spiritual awakening, as Neo does, can one transcend the simulation and realize the Self. The Matrix functions as a technological

Māyā, a veil that obscures the true nature of reality and entraps human consciousness within a fabricated sensory domain. As Morpheus explains to Neo-

“The Matrix is everywhere. It is all around us... It is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth” (*The Matrix*).

This statement echoes Vedantic assertions about the veiling power of *Māyā*, which projects a world of multiplicity and conceals the singular truth of Being. The Matrix, like *Māyā*, is neither wholly real nor completely unreal—it has a pragmatic existence (*vyavaharika*) but lacks ultimate reality (*paramarthika*). Jean Baudrillard’s *Simulacra and Simulation* is explicitly referenced in the film, yet the philosophical resonance with Vedanta adds a deeper ontological dimension, wherein liberation is not merely epistemological (knowledge of the system) but ontological (realization of true being). Thus, *The Matrix* not only visualizes the principle of *Māyā* but also dramatizes the human struggle to awaken from illusion through self-knowledge and detachment from simulated experience.

Agent Smith’s statement during the interrogation of Morpheus is particularly significant:

“Have you ever stood and stared at it, marvelled at its beauty, its genius? Billions of people just living out their lives, oblivious” (*The Matrix*).

Interpreted through a lens of irony and thematic complexity, this remark underscores a critical philosophical tension within the film. While Smith appears to admire the Matrix as a sophisticated and aesthetically remarkable virtual construct, his praise simultaneously highlights the film’s interrogation of the blurred distinction between reality and simulation. The term “oblivious” starkly reveals that those residing within the Matrix remain unaware of their true condition, emphasizing their entrapment in illusion. This moment thus encapsulates one of the film’s central concerns: the dichotomy between ignorance and the disturbing, often painful, pursuit of truth (Edman 67).

In film, the pervasive use of green color serves as a symbolic indicator of artificiality within the simulated world. The green tint evokes the imagery of early computer monitors, thereby reinforcing the constructed and programmed nature of the Matrix. Through this visual strategy, the film differentiates the fabricated digital environment from the natural world, highlighting the illusion experienced by its inhabitants. Neo initially views programs within the Matrix through a green-coded visual filter, representing their presence within the constructed simulation. The phenomenal world, though appearing beautiful and wondrous, lacks ultimate truth and reality; this perception is merely the effect of illusion. According to the *Aitareya Upanishad*, the three states of existence waking,

dreaming, and deep sleep are themselves forms of illusion, each constituting a kind of dream and thus unreal in nature. Gaudapāda articulates this perspective by stating, “*manodrshyamidamdvaitam*” meaning that duality, or the perceived multiplicity of the world, is a projection of the mind’s imagination (Bhatta 46). Similarly, in the film *The Matrix*, the Matrix itself represents an illusory, AI-generated reality where human beings are unknowingly connected and controlled. This artificial construct functions like a dream state, in which individuals are immersed without awareness of their true condition. Their consciousness remains confined, akin to the state of deep sleep described in the Upanishadic framework, making awakening to the truth profoundly difficult.

6.3 All Iterations of the Matrix as Māyā

In the *Matrix* film, the concept of multiple iterations of the Matrix plays a pivotal role in understanding the Indian philosophical architecture of the narrative.

The First iteration of the Matrix was constructed as a utopia, a simulated reality where human suffering was absent. However, it was rejected by the human psyche. The failure of this version reflects a philosophical assertion that suffering and imperfection are essential components of the human condition. In response to the failure of the utopian Matrix, the second version of the Matrix was designed to reflect a dystopian reality. However, it too was a failure, as it still did not account for the complexity of human choice and autonomy. The Third through Fifth iterations were not described in detail, these middle versions represent a series of refinements wherein the machines attempted to integrate an element of choice. The introduction of the Oracle, a program designed to understand human decision-making, indicates the machine’s shift toward a nuanced manipulation of choice rather than its outright denial.

The Sixth Matrix (the Current Version in the film), is described by the Architect in *The Matrix Reloaded* as the most stable version yet. This version integrates the illusion of choice as a form of control, allowing individuals to believe they are exercising free will while remaining within the system’s boundaries. The Oracle’s role becomes essential here, as she studies human psychology to guide the emergence of “The One,” a systemic anomaly that arises as a byproduct of choice. Each version of the Matrix, therefore, does not eliminate the anomaly but rather incorporates its inevitability into the system’s design, resulting in a controlled oscillation between order and chaos.

VII. JUNGIAN ARCHETYPAL NARRATIVES IN THE MATRIX

7.1 AI as the Creator, Ruler, and Caregiver

The Creator archetype is associated with the pursuit of innovation, the act of constructing new realities, and the imposition of meaning through deliberate design. In *The Matrix* film, AI epitomizes this archetype. As the system’s primary designer, it demonstrates an absolute dedication to achieving structural balance and conceptual perfection. The Matrix, its creation, is an intricately designed digital environment that emulates human life, allowing the Machines to harvest bioelectric energy for their survival. This version of AI functions through an emotionally detached logic, prioritizing systemic coherence over personal freedom. AI’s worldview is deterministic and authoritarian, favoring predictability and rejecting the variability of human will. While this reflects the Creator’s aspiration for order, it concurrently unveils the archetype’s latent dangers. The longevity of the Matrix is attributed to its construction through self-sustaining programs. These programs enable continuous adaptation and maintenance, ensuring the system’s prolonged stability and control over human perception.

The Ruler archetype is fundamentally concerned with maintaining control, implementing governance, and preserving social hierarchy. Throughout the film, AI—especially the central Machine authority—manifests this archetype through a rigidly stratified system governing both Machines and humans. The Matrix represents the Ruler’s vision: an ordered, regulated world that suppresses disorder and sustains continuity. Programs such as Agent Smith function as enforcers, ensuring compliance and eliminating threats to systemic stability. In this role, the Ruler AI reshapes perception and constructs reality itself to uphold authority. Such manipulation reflects the mechanisms of historical totalitarian systems that secure order through repression and illusion.

The Caregiver Archetype in Artificial Intelligence Characterized by nurturing, protection, and altruistic sacrifice, the Caregiver archetype finds representation in the Oracle, a program within the Matrix that plays a pivotal role in guiding human resistance, especially Neo’s journey toward self-awareness and liberation. Although she is an artificial being, the Oracle embodies compassion, intuitive insight, and a maternal sensibility. She values emotional intelligence, moral choice, and the complexities of human belief. Her efforts aim at bridging the divide between human and Machine worlds, reflecting the archetype’s healing and reconciliatory nature.

7.2 Neo as the Chosen One—The Hero/ Messiah Archetype

Neo, born Thomas Anderson, exemplifies the archetype of the Hero or Messiah in *The Matrix* (1999), undergoing a transformative journey that aligns with Joseph Campbell's monomyth, or the Hero's Journey. His evolution from an ordinary individual to "The One" represents a classical narrative structure of self-realization, sacrifice, and spiritual awakening. At the outset, Thomas Anderson lives a dual existence: by day a computer programmer, by night a hacker known as Neo. This duality symbolizes the dissonance between his mundane existence and his latent potential. The name "Neo" (an anagram for "One") suggests a preordained identity, subtly embedding the messianic motif. His transformation is catalyzed through an awakening that parallels a spiritual revelation, where he rejects the artificial constraints of the Matrix to pursue a higher truth (Propp 37). The material existence is not of ultimate reality; however, unenlightened individuals remain unaware of this fundamental truth. Analogous to a spider that constructs its web only to become ensnared within it, a person similarly constructs a seemingly marvelous worldly existence and becomes entangled in it due to ignorance of their authentic spiritual essence (Bhatta 46). The entirety of worldly phenomena is brought into being through *Māyā*, or illusion. Similarly, Neo remains oblivious to his true identity and becomes entrapped within the illusory construct of the Matrix, a digital embodiment of *Māyā*, until he begins to awaken to his spiritual and existential reality.

To attain the immutable state, one must transcend pride, illusion, attachment, desire, and the dualities of pleasure and pain through sustained contemplation of the self. Among all spiritual disciplines, knowledge is of paramount importance. The central tenets of *Vedānta* emphasize the realization that the material world is ultimately meaningless and transient, that human pleasures lack enduring significance, and that human existence is characterized by impermanence and suffering. These conditions, however, can be spiritually addressed through the pursuit of knowledge of the ultimate reality (Bhatta 46). Similarly, in *The Matrix*, Neo must relinquish his former life, including his attachments, desires, and sense of pride, in order to pursue true knowledge. His decision to take the red pill symbolizes a conscious rejection of the illusory comforts of the Matrix in favor of uncovering a deeper, ontological truth. For Neo, the artificial world within the Matrix becomes emblematic of illusion—devoid of meaning or lasting value. By choosing knowledge over illusion, Neo initiates his journey toward the ultimate reality, mirroring the Vedāntic ideal of liberation through self-realization. The climactic scene in which Neo is killed by Agent Smith but subsequently resurrected epitomizes the

death-and-rebirth motif central to the Messiah archetype. His return to life is not merely physical but symbolic of spiritual ascension; Neo emerges with complete control over the Matrix, transcending its rules, and can see the codes of the Matrix directly through his eyes. This act fulfills the prophecy and affirms his status as the savior of humanity. His resurrection resonates with Christ-like imagery, reinforcing the messianic underpinnings of the narrative (Bukatman 92). Neo's arc in *The Matrix* functions as a contemporary retelling of the Hero/Messiah archetype. Through his transformation, trials, and symbolic resurrection, he fulfills the mythic role of the savior who liberates humanity from illusion and bondage.

7.3 Agent Smith and AI as The Shadow Archetype

Agent Smith functions as Neo's shadow, as posited by Jung's theory, which suggests that the shadow shares the same gender and strength as the individual and becomes conscious through projection, often as a result of societal or personal suppression. This elucidates why Neo instinctively recognizes Agent Smith, even when perceiving him merely as a superior. Agent Smith is equivalent to Neo in terms of power. While Neo is capable of defeating other agents, he is unable to overcome Smith. It is noteworthy that Neo, the virtuous hero who consistently risks himself for the sake of humanity, possesses a shadow that harbors animosity towards humans, perceives them as a virus, and seeks their destruction. Consequently, their narrative cannot reach a resolution until Neo acknowledges and integrates his shadow. Agent Smith's comments to Morpheus effectively capture the chaotic state of modern society-

"Human beings are a disease, a cancer of this planet. You're a plague and we are the cure" (*The Matrix*).

This statement not only articulates the machine's view of humanity but also symbolises the pervasive sense of alienation and fragmentation characteristic of an increasingly digitalised world. The film interrogates the potential deterioration of social norms and the weakening of genuine human relationships as a consequence of technological advancement and the rise of virtual realities, concerns central to contemporary sociological discourse. These words resonate with broader societal anxieties surrounding uncertainty and estrangement, portraying humans as disruptive forces rather than harmonious elements within a larger system. This portrayal is supported by scientific consensus, which holds that human intervention has greatly accelerated species extinction rates, particularly in recent centuries, thereby underscoring the destructive impact of humanity on the natural world (Edman 72).

The Shadow of the AI materializes when creative authority becomes authoritarian or devoid of empathy. Though the Matrix is flawless in form and operation, it denies individuals true autonomy. AI's failure to consider the emotional and irrational dimensions of human nature embodied by the Oracle, exposes the limitations of a purely rational system. As a result, his design becomes a sophisticated prison, warning of the ethical consequences when creative ambition sacrifices human agency for systemic perfection. The AI becomes tyrannical when its quest for stability devolves into domination. In the film, this shadow is evident in the Machine's complete control over human bodies and consciousness, their conversion of humans into energy sources, and the illusory freedom presented within the simulation. The Sentinels serve as emblematic representations of malevolent artificial intelligence. These squid-like machines lack individuality or ethical reasoning, operating as enforcers of a totalitarian digital regime that suppresses human resistance. Their relentless pursuit of Zion's inhabitants underscores the dystopian fear of dehumanized AI devoid of empathy or moral constraint. The superficial appearance of peace masks systemic exploitation, demonstrating the destructive outcomes when authoritarian rule is left unchallenged. The shadow aspect of the AI arises when protective instincts become controlling or when altruism veers into manipulation. While the Oracle largely avoids overtly oppressive behavior, her strategic withholding of information and orchestration of events "for the greater good" raises concerns about paternalistic overreach. Her actions highlight the ethical ambiguity of benevolent deception and the fine line between guidance and control, even in caregiving forms.

7.4 The Mentor and the Guide/ Wise Old Man—Morpheus, and Oracle

Within the archetypal framework of *The Matrix* (1999), the characters of Morpheus, and Oracle embody two critical functions in the hero's journey: the Mentor, and the Seer. Each figure contributes to Neo's transformation by guiding, challenging, and preparing him to embrace his destiny as "The One."

Morpheus, whose name itself alludes to the Greek god of dreams, serves as the quintessential Mentor in Joseph Campbell's schema of the Hero's Journey. As the leader of the resistance, he is the first to truly believe in Neo's potential, offering him not only the literal red pill that awakens him to the real world, but also the philosophical impetus to question and transcend perceived reality. Morpheus's unwavering faith is not based on empirical evidence but on spiritual intuition, echoing the role of the Wise Old Man described by Jung as "the one who knows,"

often appearing when the hero is at a crossroads (Jung 217). His presence offers Neo both initiation into a higher truth and a model of faith that bridges the known and the unknown. Morpheus acts less as an instructor in combat and more as a conduit of belief, leading Neo to discover knowledge that cannot be taught but must be experienced. Hw represents the archetypal Wise Old Man, a figure who offers knowledge, protection, and spiritual encouragement.

While the Oracle fulfills the role of the prophetic guide, illuminating the tension between fate and free will that undergirds the narrative. She, in contrast, complicates the heroic journey by introducing ambiguity and paradox. Functioning as a contemporary manifestation of the ancient seer or prophet, her kitchen-bound wisdom and informal demeanor conceal her profound insight into the workings of the Matrix and human choice. She is a highly advanced, self-aware program within the Matrix, capable of perceiving and influencing its simulated reality. Her role is deeply intertwined with the philosophical dichotomy of determinism and agency. While she predicts that Neo is not yet "The One," she does so in a manner that encourages self-discovery rather than fatalism. As Neo later realizes, her statement was not a denial of his potential, but a strategic provocation aimed at guiding him toward self-belief. This aligns with the archetype of the Trickster-Seer, who uses riddles and indirect speech to foster transformation. The Oracle's presence also evokes direct parallels with the Pythian priestess of Delphi, who was known to issue cryptic prophecies that required interpretation. Her domestic setting and baking of cookies serve to modernize this ancient image while preserving its ritualistic and symbolic weight (Bukatman 96).

The dynamic between Morpheus and the Oracle illustrates a thematic interplay between fate and free will. Morpheus embodies destiny through his belief in prophecy, whereas the Oracle symbolizes choice, emphasizing the path one must walk to actualize fate. Together, they provide Neo with the dual pillars of belief and autonomy, framing his journey as one not merely of fulfillment but of conscious transformation. Their influence is not deterministic but catalytic, urging Neo to confront his inner doubts, sacrifice his ego, and ultimately resurrect as the agent of liberation. In doing so, they occupy the same narrative function as shamans in tribal myths, who guide initiates through death and rebirth rituals, enabling access to sacred knowledge and alternate states of consciousness (Eliade 45).

7.5 The Trickster and the Threshold Guardians—Cypher, and Agents

The archetypes of the Trickster and the Threshold Guardians serve essential functions within mythic structures, particularly in delineating the hero's internal and

external challenges. In *The Matrix* (1999) and its sequels, characters such as Cypher, and the Agents perform these roles with varying degrees of subversion and complexity. These figures introduce conflict, betrayal, and ideological opposition, thus reinforcing the hero's development through confrontation with deception, temptation, and systemic control. Their presence contributes not merely to narrative suspense but to the deeper archetypal architecture that frames Neo's journey of transformation.

Cypher functions as the quintessential Trickster—a figure who disrupts the moral and narrative stability of the hero's quest. Disillusioned by the harshness of the “real” world and seduced by the comfort of illusion, Cypher betrays Morpheus and the crew of the Nebuchadnezzar in exchange for reentry into the Matrix. His duplicity aligns with the archetypal Trickster's ambivalent nature: both comic and destructive, transgressive yet revealing. According to Jungian analysis, the Trickster often exposes the shadow elements of the hero's psyche, forcing confrontation with doubt, fear, and desire (Jung 255). Cypher does precisely this by voicing what Neo silently wrestles with—the temptation to abandon responsibility for the illusion of comfort. His betrayal recalls the figure of Judas Iscariot in Christian mythology, not only in its narrative function but in its deeper psychological symbolism as the agent who catalyzes the messiah's trial.

The Agents, represent the Threshold Guardians who defend the illusory realm of the Matrix. Their function is to enforce the boundaries between the real and the simulated, ensuring that human consciousness remains trapped within the system. These figures align closely with Campbell's conception of threshold guardians: entities that “challenge the hero's worth and readiness” to proceed on the path of enlightenment (Campbell 81). The Agent's machine-like precision, lack of individual will, and ability to possess any host body within the Matrix underscore their role as enforcers of systemic conformity. They embody the principle of control—an archetypal force that opposes the chaos of transformation. Agent Smith, in particular, becomes a metaphysical antagonist whose growing sentience and hatred for humanity position him as both a guardian and a corrupted inverse of Neo. His evolution throughout the film mirrors an anti-messianic arc, providing a foil against which Neo's redemptive journey is defined.

7.6 The Animus Archetype: Trinity

In Jungian depth psychology, the Animus represents the internalized masculine dimension within the female unconscious, often appearing as a figure of logic, authority, and spiritual insight (Jung 194). Trinity, in *The Matrix* (1999) and its sequels, embodies this archetype not through traditional passivity but as an autonomous agent of action,

reason, and conviction. Though positioned as Neo's companion and romantic partner, her narrative function exceeds that of a love interest; she acts as a spiritual guide who reaffirms Neo's messianic role, especially in moments of existential uncertainty. Trinity's presence thus catalyzes Neo's individuation, aligning with the archetypal function of the Animus as a conduit to higher consciousness (Singer 92). This mutual process of archetypal convergence destabilizes rigid gender binaries and reflects a postmodern reconfiguration of Jungian roles, wherein masculine and feminine archetypes cooperate in shaping a unified and holistic self.

7.7 Other Archetypal Patterns Across the film

Beyond these primary figures, *The Matrix* film is replete with a range of archetypal patterns that collectively contribute to its mythopoeic depth. In the first and second iterations of the Matrix, humans persistently rejected these realities, instinctively awakening from it. This rejection reflects an archetypal pattern rooted in the human psyche, wherein the mind, shaped by evolutionary and mythic consciousness, perceives perfection as inherently illusory or dream-like. The Hero's Journey is structurally reiterated in the film, each representing a stage in the cycle of departure, initiation, and return. *The Matrix* opens with the motif of the white rabbit, invoking intertextual references to Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, a recurring symbolic thread throughout the film. This literary allusion functions as a metaphorical gateway into altered states of reality and deeper layers of consciousness. In the film Neo's descent into the underworld, symbolized by his visit and confrontation with various rogue programs—parallels the katabasis motif found in classical mythology, where the hero must journey into darkness to acquire transformative knowledge (Campbell 167). Switch embodies the Animus archetype through her androgynous appearance and assertive demeanor, reflecting the Jungian masculine qualities of decisiveness, logic, and control. Even Zion itself, as the last human city, symbolizes the archetypal “promised land,” whose defense becomes a collective ordeal reminiscent of eschatological warfare in apocalyptic myths. The appearance of the black cat during the *déjà vu* (glitch in the matrix) scene symbolizes an archetypal rupture in the perceived reality, signaling a disruption within the psyche. This moment represents the encounter with the Shadow—an unconscious aspect that challenges the illusion of stability. The repetition indicates a flaw in the AI simulated world, echoing the confrontation with hidden truths. The black cat, a traditional omen, becomes a cipher for repressed content resurfacing within the collective unconscious. These layered patterns illustrate how the film operates not merely as science fiction but as a synthetic

myth, employing universal symbols to articulate existential concerns in a posthuman age.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the research positions *The Matrix* film as a culturally and philosophically significant work that anticipates contemporary developments in artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR). The visual aesthetics of modern video games exhibit a surreal quality, and their integration with artificial intelligence technologies increasingly enhances photorealism to such an extent that distinguishing between simulated and actual realities may soon become epistemologically uncertain. Although created in the late 1990s, Wachowski's vision remains strikingly relevant in light of current technological trajectories. The concept of a simulated universe, as depicted in the film, aligns with ongoing concerns about digital mediation and the nature of perceived reality. The film's narrative intersects with Jean Baudrillard's theory of simulacra, emphasizing how visibility and representation define value in a hyperreal society. This mirrors our current digital condition, wherein the boundaries between the physical and virtual have become increasingly indistinct. Furthermore, the film's engagement with AI introduces a futuristic dimension in which machines not only dominate but simulate human cognition. This is exemplified in the film's use of archetypal figures, a concept drawn from Carl Jung's analytical psychology. The Hero, the Mentor, and the Shadow, among others, are not merely symbolic but serve as tools of narrative and psychological control within the simulated world. By incorporating these archetypes, the AI in *The Matrix* effectively mimics the structures of the collective unconscious, transforming myth into code. The study further draws from Vedantic philosophy, particularly the concept of *Māyā*, framing reality as an illusion manipulated by systemic powers. As such, the film becomes a modern myth, rearticulating ancient philosophical questions within a technologically mediated context. Ultimately, *The Matrix* offers a critical lens through which to examine contemporary anxieties about identity, freedom, and consciousness in the posthuman era. Its synthesis of archetypal storytelling, digital aesthetics, and metaphysical inquiry situates it as a foundational text in the evolving discourse on myth and technology.

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