



Skepticism Films. Knowing and Doubting the World in Contemporary Cinema
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Short summary:

Cinema has always displayed an affinity to characters with distorted or even hallucinatory relations to reality. With films such as *THE TRUMAN SHOW*, the *MATRIX* films or *INCEPTION*, contemporary filmmakers add another layer to this canon of film characters: unwitting ordinary victims of deception for whom the skepticist fear that the world is not real but a simulation, fake environment or a dream has become true. They are 'skepticism films': dramatized, fictional configurations of the thought experiments which are part and parcel of philosophical reflection on knowledge and doubt.

The dissertation "Skepticism Films. Knowing and Doubting the World in Contemporary Cinema" introduces skepticism films as updated configurations of skepticist themes which exemplify the pervasion of philosophical ideas in popular culture. The dissertation defends a pluralistic film-philosophical position according to which films can be, but need not be, expressions of philosophical thought in their own right. It critically investigates the influence of ideas of skepticism on film-philosophical theories, exemplified in the works of film-philosophers such as Cavell, Deleuze, Rodowick, Früchtel, and Pisters, and develops a typology of skepticism films by analysing *THE TRUMAN SHOW*, *INCEPTION*, *MATRIX*, *VANILLA SKY*, *THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR*, *MOON*, and other contemporary skepticism films. With its focus on skepticism as one of the most significant philosophical problems, the dissertation aims at a better understanding of the dynamic interplay between film, theories of film and philosophy.