

The ignorance of bliss

[Sociology](#), [Ethics](#)



The Ignorance of Bliss Is it really better to be completely deluded about your reality, and live a still fairly normal life, rather than deciding to take arms against your previously unknown captors and live a harsh and barbaric lifestyle, but with complete freedom. This is one of the moral difficulties presented by the movie "The Matrix". Almost the whole of the human population is living in a complete delusion of their surroundings, thinking that they are actually living normal lives, when in actuality they are energy sources for giant machines. There is a select few that live outside the "matrix" and are mounting a resistance against the machines, but, like previously mentioned, what is the morally correct thing for the "resistance" to do. Leave the people in the matrix, or allow them to fight in a hostile world? According to John Stuart Mill's "Utilitarianism" the choice is simple. Leave them in their world where they could be the happiest. This view is almost naïve in its simplicity. The decision could never be so simple. John Stuart Mill's "Utilitarianism" explains how the most morally right thing to do, in its most simple, broken down form, is the thing that results in the most happiness to whoever is experiencing the consequences. When looked at from this angle, again, the decision Neo from "The Matrix" is very simple: leave all of the people inside the matrix exactly where they are, as their position within the matrix leaves them in more happiness than any life outside it. But, as previously mentioned, this seems like a completely ridiculous idea, as all of those humans are being utterly deceived in ways they cannot possibly imagine. So, how in any way can this be the correct decision? Would it not be better to allow those people to fight for their freedom? Is not freedom an unalienable right of all of humanity? But, then

again, would not the decision to take those people out of the matrix be taking away their self same freedom of choice? Taking the decision out of their hands and making it for them, that right there, would be almost the same as the machines themselves. There is the argument that allowing the humans to atrophy in the cocoons that the machines are making them stay in would be the morally incorrect decision. That true happiness is actually imperfect, that the only way to actually be happy with your life as it is, is to be unsatisfied with it. This would allow for pursuit, allow for room to grow and improve your life more than it is. If one is completely happy, then how could there be anything to live for? So, in essence, if one were to take those humans from all their happiness and life within the matrix, everything that they have built within their own minds, release them from the lie in which they are living, and bring them to the hostile world outside the matrix, to fight creatures who are infinitely more powerful than humans, it could be considered the more moral decision, as it improves the actual quality of happiness that they experience. This quality of life, quality of happiness, and quality of freedom is worth any suffering, as it would give those humans something to live for and fight for. That itself improves the morality of the decision to free the humans over that of leaving them in the matrix. It is better to have a certain quality of happiness, than to have more happiness of a lesser quality. But, neither one of these seems to be the truly moral decision. How could anybody take the lives of any other person into their own hands and make it their own decision? Not only that, but to make this decision in the name of morality makes it immoral. Instead, the better decision would, in point of fact, be to not make the decision at all. There is

almost no way to make such a decision without infringing upon the rights of those people you are deciding for. So, instead, why not allow them to make the decision for themselves. And this is exactly what the movie "The Matrix" actually does. Neo is first given the choice, "the blue pill, or the red pill". One would make the person who took it fall asleep and completely forget about "the outside world". The other would break the consumer free of the clutches of the machines and allow them to live outside the matrix. So, now the decision does actually seem to be quite simple, although very different. It seems that the decision would be to give the decision up to the very person whose choice it should be, the imprisoned person. This way they could retain their freedom of choice, maybe they decide to break free and defeat the machines, or to stay oblivious and live their lives as they remain; but no matter what that decision is, it should be their own. Then again, this decision causes a second moral crisis to surface. By fighting the machines, the human resistance will be making a decision for the other humans who are choosing to stay in the matrix. By fighting the machines, the human resistance would be fighting the matrix, which in turn, would be fighting the people who wished to stay inside the matrix. So, what could the actual correct moral decision be? In fact, is there ever a "correct" moral decision? It seems that, the only logical conclusion to be made from this, is that there is no simple decision to be made. Because each decision that a human makes has a huge effect on the lives of other people. In this case, that same decision could have astronomical effects on the entire human race. So, when that is taken into account, the person making the decisions, in this case, Neo must make this decision for the benefit of humanity. And thus, the decision

must be made for the furthering of the entirety of humanity, and thus, no one human's needs could be made a priority. And so, in conclusion, the imprisonment of humanity must be ended, and all humans must fight the machines to improve the quality of life, freedom, and happiness for all human life. What a difficult decision. According to John Stuart Mill's, the proper "Utilitarian" choice would be to leave the humans in the Matrix, because it allows them to stay in their relatively "normal" life. But, leaving them to be deceived on such a degrading level could never possibly be considered the moral choice. There is just something so instinctually wrong about seeing nearly your entire species incapacitated and used so terribly. So even from a purely self-preserving point of view, that decision is wrong. But then again, neither one of these decisions are truly correct, as you are still taking their freedom of choice. So the true choice, from an individual standpoint, would be to allow those people trapped in the matrix the choice to either stay within their deluded lives, or leave it and fight the machines. But from a species stand point, the only choice is to fight and free everyone for the sake of our future. Citations The Matrix. Dir. Andy Wachowski and Larry Wachowski. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1999. DVD. Feinberg, J., and R. Shafer-Landau. Reason and responsibility, readings in some basic problems of philosophy. 14. Boston: Wadsworth Pub Co, 2011. Print.