

Relation between
matrix and descartes
meditations
philosophy essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

René Descartes was a French philosopher and mathematician who were really famous with his philosophical works, especially with *Meditations on First Philosophy*. His ideas in *Meditations* have been an important source of inspiration for a considerable number of movies. One of the most significant movie that reflects Descartes' ideas is *Matrix* in which Keanu Reeves "Thomas Anderson" is a computer programmer for a well known company and also has another life as a hacker "Neo". He starts to get mysterious messages on his computer and after meeting with Morpheus, is told that reality is totally different from what he and other people perceive it to be. Within the scope of this assignment, I search for relations between the movie and the Descartes' ideas by referring to significant quotations from a translation of *Meditation on First Philosophy* which was written by Christopher Biffle and specific scenes from the movie.

In the movie, the reality that most people perceive is actually a dream that is created by a powerful being to deceive humanity. People think that they live in a city, breathe air and the year is 1999. However, in reality, the year is approximately 2199, there is no air and the world is in a bad situation like is attacked by war. As it is indicated in *Meditation I* (Biffle, 2001) :

This would be perfectly obvious-if I weren't a man accustomed to sleeping at night whose experiences while a sleep are at least as far-fetched as those madmen have while awake. How often, at night, I've been convinced that I was here, sitting before the fire, wearing my dressing gown, when in fact I was undressed and between the covers of my bed! But now I am looking at this piece of paper with my eyes wide open; the head that I am shaking has not been lulled to sleep; I put my hand out consciously and deliberately and

<https://assignbuster.com/relation-between-matrix-and-descartes-meditations-philosophy-essay/>

feel. None of this would be as distinct if I were asleep. As if I can't remember having been tricked by similar thoughts while asleep! When I think carefully about this, I see so plainly that there are no reliable signs by which I can distinguish sleeping from waking that I am stupefied-and my stupor itself suggests that I am asleep!

People live in a dream and can not distinguish it from reality. It is obvious from some scenes of the movie that Neo also has doubts about it. In one of them, agents take Neo to interrogate and convince him to work for them to defeat Morpheus. Agent Smith made Neo's lips be locked in order not to make him speak and put a transmitter in him which is like a spider. Then the other scene starts with Neo's waking up. The first thing that he does is to check his mouth and it is normal. However, the transmitter is in him and he gets rid of it by the help of Trinity who is one of the characters in the film. If all the things he has seen are a dream, then why is there a transmitter in him? In addition, if all the things are real, then why is there anything with his mouth? This is why the world that people live is a computer simulation called matrix. Some events can occur in matrix and in order to make people believe everything that they perceive, some impossible things that are hard to believe can be seen as dreams.

Descartes mentions that there are no certain differences between a dream and reality. When someone dreams about something, he is not aware of doing it exactly, thus there is an impossibility in ignoring that what people perceive as reality is not a dream. Descartes has doubts about being aware of whether you are in a dream or in real which is the dream argument and in another scene of the movie, Morpheus concludes the same doubts as he asks:
<https://assignbuster.com/relation-between-matrix-and-descartes-meditations-philosophy-essay/>

Have you ever had a dream, Neo, that you were so sure was real? What if you were unable to awake from that dream? How would you know the difference between the dream and the real world?

In another scene, Morpheus asked Neo what reality really is. Are there the things that we comprehend? If we think about the movie, people believe that the world that they live is real and most of the things that they have learned are coming by the help of the senses. According to Descartes (Biffle, 2001), "Of course, whatever I have so far accepted as supremely true I have learned from the senses or through the senses. But I have occasionally caught the senses deceiving me, and it's prudent never completely to trust those who have cheated us even once." Things that we get by our senses are the impulses that are conveyed to brain by the nerves and interpreted by it. There is no exact way that we can know that something real is created by our experiences or knowledge or it is just a general idea that we believe. Our brain may deceive us and it may just dream by itself. I can give an example from the scene that Neo sees the woman in red. His senses trick him and when he turns back to see the woman again, he faces with an agent. On the other hand, there is another thing said by Descartes (Biffle, 2001), "Similarly, while things like eyes, heads, and hands may be imaginary, it must be granted that some simpler and more universal things are real-the "real colors" from which the true and false images in our thoughts are formed." According to Descartes, I can say that the images that the matrix created or the woman in red exist, and in their creation, there are some bases on the production of them. Even if the images are imaginary, their bases are real. The human figure or especially a woman figure, the color red are all real.

Thus, we can tell that Descartes' ideas about senses are supported in the film by this scene.

-

Descartes continues and further states that since deception exists, there must be some evil responsible. However, rather than attributing this evil to God himself, he blames some malevolent demon. This "demon" in this movie is obviously the artificial intelligence responsible for the creation of the matrix. The Matrix was created to control humanity for the intelligence's own gain, so it is inherently evil. Descartes proceeds to talk about how in order to truly be free, one must do his best to resist deception and know what can truly be known. Neo and the rest of the ship's crew are doing their best to free humanity, but humanity in general continues to be deceived by what appears to be so real.

The Matrix simulates reality so well, that it never occurs to humanity to doubt what they see. Even Neo, the character the story centers around is clueless at the beginning. Only once he is confronted with the truth does he begin to doubt, but even then he attempts to deny it. Descartes ponders this in his meditations as well. He reflects on humanity's tendency to believe the uncertain based on comfort with the idea. Once someone is used to an idea, they tend to resist letting it go because it is so ingrained in them. He continues to state that one should treat any idea that can be doubted as being absolutely false so that no belief is built upon an uncertain foundation. However, some choose to go back to the comfort of believing that which is not true, such as Cypher deciding to go back to the Matrix. He chooses the

comfort of the deception over the harsh truth, and opts to prolong his deceit. He conspires against humanity's freedom for his own personal gain.

Obviously, there is a much deeper side to this movie than the action scenes and special effects. There are some very noticeable parallels with the first meditation of Descartes as well as other works not mentioned. It revives an interest in a topic that has been pondered for quite some time. Thus encouraging a new generation to ponder what can truly be known. This movie, when viewed in the correct light, really brings into question what deceptions truly exist in our lives.

Spoon thing