

**Communication, Cyberculture and Cinema: Baudrillard and Matrix:
“the limit point between two worlds”¹**

**Comunicação, cibercultura e cinema:
Baudrillard e Matrix: “o ponto limite entre dois mundos”**

**Comunicación, Cibercultura y Cine: Baudrillard y Matrix:
“el límite entre dos mundos”**

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Abstract:

Nowadays, we live in the so-called Network Society (Castells, 2003), a reality in which presence is no longer limited to physical places and begins to happen especially in virtual places. The online environment has come to emerge what is known as Cyberculture, a characteristic phenomenon of cyberspace and in which the pre-existing culture extends and renews itself and recreates itself. In this paper, we seek to explore the question of identity and the doubts that hang in the head of the human being about what is considered real or not, making use of the film *The Matrix* (1999), of the Wachowski brothers, where we will retrieve excerpts from the film and with which it can be connected with *Simulacra and Simulation* (Baudrillard, 1981).

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Resumo:

Hoje em dia, vivemos na chamada sociedade em rede (Castells, 2003), uma realidade na qual a presença não está mais limitada aos lugares físicos e começa a acontecer especialmente em lugares virtuais. O ambiente em rede veio emergir o que é conhecido como cyberculture, um fenômeno característico do ciberespaço e em que a cultura preexistente se estende e se renova e recria-se. Neste artigo, procuramos explorar a questão da identidade e as dúvidas que pendem na cabeça do ser humano sobre o que é considerado real ou não, fazendo uso do filme *Matrix* (1999), dos irmãos Wachowski, onde vamos recuperar trechos do filme e com o que ele pode ser conectado com *Simulacros e simulação* (Baudrillard, 1981).

Palavras-chave:

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Palabras clave:

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Resumen:

Hoy en día vivimos en la llamada Sociedad en Red (Castells, 2003), una realidad en la que la presencia ya no se limita a los lugares físicos y comienza a suceder especialmente en lugares virtuales. El entorno en red ha llegado a surgir lo que se conoce como la cibercultura, un fenómeno característico del ciberespacio y en el que la cultura preexistente se extiende y se renueva y se recrea. En este artículo, buscamos explorar la cuestión de la identidad y las dudas que cuelgan en la cabeza del ser humano sobre lo que se considera real o no, haciendo uso de la película *Matrix* (1999), de los hermanos Wachowski, donde recuperaremos extractos de la película y que se puede conectar con *Simulacra y Simulación* (Baudrillard, 1981).

Communication, Cyberculture and Cinema: Baudrillard and Matrix: “the limit point between two worlds”

1. Introduction

We live in the so-called Network Society (CASTELLS, 2003), a reality in which the presence is no longer limited to physical places and begins to happen especially in virtual places. The online environment has emerged as what is known as cyberculture, a phenomenon characteristic of cyberspace and in which the preexisting culture extends renews itself, recreates itself in a kind of symbiosis between the individual present in the network and its characteristics. Pierre Lévy explains that “we cannot separate the material world - and still less its artificial part - from the ideas through which technical objects are conceived and used, nor from the humans who invent, produce, and use them” (LÉVY, 1999, p.22).

It is in this society that we relate to our fellow human beings, which results in the multiplicity of virtual connections and of which we have little connection. Nowadays, cyber, digital, online, technology, in general, constitutes a “new” space whereas we have said there is no time or space, or otherwise, exist in unison. In this way, we try to explore in this article the question of the identity and doubts that we have about what is considered real or not. In other words, ideas about the relationship between man and the machine, some dualities between Modernity and Post-Modernity, the postmodern subject will be approached and how it relates to an ephemeral society saturated with technologies and means of communication and finally, an exemplary approach will be made using the film *The Matrix* (1999)

by the Wachowski brothers, where we will retrieve excerpts from the film and with which we can make a connection with the work *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981).

2. Cyberculture: building a concept

With the evolution of the informational and communicational landscape, coinciding with the evolutionary forms of Web 2.0, “new seeds began to emerge in the field of the media with the appearance of equipment and devices that enabled the emergence of a culture of the available and transitory” (SANTAELLA, 2003, p.26). Later on, the coexistence of these different types of media in cyberspace was triggered:

the proliferation of media, brought about by the emergence of media whose messages tend towards segmentation and diversification, and the hybridization of messages, caused by a mixture of media, were synchronic to the heated debates of the 1980s on postmodernity. (SANTAELLA, 2003, p. 27).

From here until the consolidation of Cyberculture and its forms of expression, in cyberspace, the gap was filled very quickly:

cyberculture takes the copresence of the messages back to their context as it did in oral societies, but on another scale, in a completely different orbit. The new universality no longer depends on the self-sufficiency of the texts, on fixation and independence of meanings. It builds and extends itself through the interconnection of messages with each other, through its permanent link with virtual communities in creation, which give it varied meanings in a permanent renewal. (LÉVY, 1999, p. 15)

Lévy explains that “the growth of cyberspace results from an international movement of young people who are eager to experiment collectively with forms of communication different from those that the classical media propose to us” (*ibidem*, p. 11). This is precisely the premise: the development of new forms of communication, from those that already existed, but which the traditional media could not power in the same way as Web 2.0.

he anxiety, desire and curiosity on the part of the human being to know what is beyond the “real reality” now materializes in a universal space where everyone can communicate, regardless of their social, socioeconomic, cultural, political or age status. In this sense, Lévy sees cyberspace as:

the new medium of communication that comes from the worldwide interconnection of computers. The term specifies not only the material infrastructure of digital communication but also the oceanic universe of information it houses, as well as the human beings who navigate and nourish this universe. (LÉVY, 1999, p. 17)

Cyberculture, inscribed in this cybernetic space, which the author calls “network”, “specifies the set of techniques (materials and intellectuals), practices, attitudes, modes of thought and values that develop along with the growth of the cyberspace” (*Idem, ibidem*). It is in this environment that the “new” symbolic exchanges happen, codified messages that pass from producer to producer, from receiver to receiver, narrowing interpersonal networks, accumulating knowledge, archiving digital memories, constructing and deconstructing identities.

The human being, in his condition of being eminently social, cultural and

political has the power to decide who wants to be in cyberspace, so that the way he appears and how we see it may or may not coincide with the true identity of the subject. As Correia explains, “in this hyperconnected world, identities are created around appearance, leisure, image and consumption. Human ties have become fragile quite unlike real off-line connections” (2017, p.70). Santaella believes that:

Telecommunications and accelerated modes of transport are causing the planet to shrink more and more as the traditional parameters of time and space disappear, it is assumed, as a rule, that technologies are the measure of our salvation or the cause of our perdition. (SANTAELLA, 2003, p. 30)

Ribeiro, based on the theory described in *Neuromancer* (1984), by the North American William Gibson, says that cyberspace “deals with a reality that is constituted by the production of a set of technologies, rooted in society, structures and principles both of society itself and of the individuals that are inserted in it” (2017, p.29). In this sense, we can say that the new technologies and all the mechanisms and tools that these offer us lead to the creation of new communication paradigms, namely in cyberspace, leading to the creation of “a parallel reality, a new communication framework that basically discards the need physical and face-to-face communication as a source of relationship” (*ibidem*).

3. The man and the machine

Ribeiro claims that the “traditional boundaries between man and machine, body and being, they are smeared, in a dynamic and voracious mechanics and in which the technical platforms as the ma-

chines act as an extension of our desires, a hybrid phenomenon” (2017, p.28):

Who is the postmodern subject? Who is this individual who, more than being in a network, lives in a network? Who is that identity that navigates through cyberspace and produces cyberculture?

Correia explains that “the postmodern subject is constructed not having a fixed, essential and permanent identity, but of networks and flows, of instantaneity and fluidity, causing profound and transforming changes in the formation of personal identity” (2017, p. 63-64) and Mas-sagli reinforces:

In the electronic age, this self is decentralized and fragmented into continuous instability. In this informational universe, the world is nothing but a screen and we are nothing but a play of meanings. We do not represent or write the world; he writes and represents us. (MASSAGLI, 2008, p. 372-373)

The subject, who until then was a modern being, “abandoned” this condition towards postmodernity, where it was converted to its characteristics. Prazeres addresses the issue of real/virtual dichotomies, where he talks about the separation between the body, something material, existing in physical space, and cyberspace, the immaterial, the abstract, not palpable:

The body cannot be dematerialized by its connection to cyberspace. (...) The suppression and fading that the bodies undergo in their technological representation put us under a permanent state of homesick before what we are shown to us. As an extra, cyberspace only channels fragments of intact moments whose action is still born and dies to the rhythm of social cycles in the interactions of real space. (PRAZERES, 2014, p. 27)

In this sense, Correia says that “volatility and instability have become the hallmarks of identities in the postmodern world” (CORREIA, 2017, p. 66). Even more:

The Internet is considered as one of the innovative spaces in the identity construction of the subject in postmodernity (...) leaves for a path without frontiers, where the subject transposes to another virtual environment, assumes an identity built at the moment and at the same time feels ownership to this new reality. (CORREIA, 2017, p. 67-68)

Santos gives a very concrete example of double identity by placing the subject before a computer screen:

In this opaque background where moments ago there were glitters and pixels, a fading image appears, our figure, a pale reflection that only appears from the monitor off. And, disconnected from the machine, what is seen in the background, precariously reflected, is then our own image in front of the screen, bringing to light and perhaps explaining the nuisance of a position in which we are surprised by inquiring subjectivities and disturbing identities. (SANTOS, 2001, p. 7)

The great question is: what reflection is that which is represented before us? Doubt hangs in the air: just as in a mirror, where a representation of our physiognomy appears, the same screen appears on the screen. But here the question is no longer so much in physiognomy. Reside before in the way we perceive ourselves. The question would be something like: “Is that identity mine, is it just part of it, or is it completely different?” The author speaks of an “absentee presence” (2001, p. 8), in which such a loss of sense of identity occurs:

[a] feeling that our image imposed on the computer screen may result in a kind of absence of ourselves before ourselves, an absence felt paradoxically as presence, as a melancholy return to us through traces, traces, traces, and signs that seem are evidently ours, but which bear the mark of estrangement and distance, of the apparent erasure of our singularities by the disconnection of the machine (SANTOS, 2001, p. 8)

There is a relation between the machine, created by humans, and ourselves and Prazeres points out that “recognizing the separations between time and space within this logic allows us to see more clearly how they both relate free of the limitations imposed by distance” (2014, p.16). As the author says, “the body and the connection to the network have a commitment to complementarity because without the potential for extension, the body feels the restrictions and limitations of local reach” (*ibidem*, p.27). The human body, this physical vehicle, is nothing more than “support for a human mind that could have a continuity (...) for a digital environment” (MASSAGLI, 2008, p. 375). The author states that “the identity of the individual in modern societies is something that is constantly changing and in some cases, it is practically impossible to determine or define it within time and space patterns” (2008, p. 376).

The individual within the cyberspace, where the notions of time and space come together, has the possibility of being diluted and fragmented into several different identities. In fact, in this postmodern era, it is a period in which “the limit between thinking and acting is also diluted. In a world of accelerated flow and intense circulation, there is no time for “self-evident” customs, habits, and truths to be consolidated (MASSAGLI, 2008, p. 374).

4. The real and the simulacra

Among the various theorists who studied the question of identity in and out of cyberspace, Jean Baudrillard was one of the pioneers.

According to the UOL Education website, the French philosopher was “one of the main theorists of postmodernity and one of the authors who best diagnosed contemporary malaise.” From revolutionary ideas, Baudrillard devoted himself to the study of the impact of communication and social media in postmodern culture, developing a thesis that was based on “the concept of the virtuality of the apparent world, refuting traditional scientific thinking” (portal UOL Educação). Once asked about who he was, Baudrillard replied: “What I am, I do not know. I am the simulacrum of myself”(The Guardian, 2007).

The theorist emphasized, through his studies, the influence of the object on the human being: “Baudrillard developed arguments about the increasing power of the” object “over the” subject “in modern society, and the way in which protest and resistance were increasingly absorbed and turned into fuel by the symbolic “system” of capitalism” (*Idem, ibidem*).

Author of *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981) this philosopher and sociologist believed to have “generated the loss of the referential of identities, made handmaids of technological feudalism that has no other purpose but its self-sustainability.” In his book, Baudrillard speaks of an “imperfect reality” created from an “illusion of the system” (THITY-CHERQUES, 2010, p. 7): “we deal with a generalized metastasis, the clone of the world and our mental universe” (BAUDRILLARD *apud* THIRY-CHERQUES, 2010, p. 7).

The idea of “synchronized time” and “obliterated space” represented in

the same context are key ideas of Baudrillard's work (THIRY-CHERQUES, 2010, p. 7). It is a space that dissipates at a certain time and that leads us to not be able to distinguish between the real and the virtual. It is a "hegemonic space-time code" (Idem, *ibidem*), which results in a re-creation of values: "the system has trained us to believe that work, technology, information culture and leisure are desirable. Our reality is codified, it consists of passwords" (BAUDRILLARD *apud* THIRY-CHERQUES, 2010, p. 7).

"Autonomy" and "submission" are two more keywords present in Baudrillard's thoughts, which argue that the individual is divided by the two conditions: either autonomous or submissive to the illusion of perfect reality (THIRY-CHERQUES, 2010, p. 8). In this sense, the individual lives, produces and consumes artificiality. The rational action of the worker consists of operating in the hyper-reality of the system, entering into the sphere of floating meanings, floating senses and meaninglessness.

It is in *Simulacra and Simulation* that Baudrillard launches the challenge about the transition from Modernism to Postmodernism:

For Baudrillard, modern societies are organized around the production and consumption of commodities, while postmodern societies are organized around simulation and the play of images and signs, denoting a situation in which codes, models, and signs are the organizing forms of a new social order where simulation rules. (STANFORD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PHILOSOPHY, 2007)

Baudrillard explains that in postmodern societies, identity is created from imagery models, codes that determine who we are and others, simulat-

ing someone in a simulated world: "in the society of simulation, identities are constructed by the appropriation of images, and codes and models determine how individuals perceive themselves and relate to other people" (STANFORD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PHILOSOPHY, 2007). Everything is determined by the experience of the simulacrum and therefore we live on the margins of a life built according to the postmodern and surreal parameters.

The differentiating factor, so characteristic of modernity, is losing its strength, giving way to the "dedifferentiation" of which Baudrillard speaks. With this the author intends to explain that the simulation is a phenomenon where each one can choose who wants to be:

in Baudrillard's society of simulation [...] differences between individuals and groups implode in a rapidly mutating or changing dissolution of the social and the previous boundaries and structures upon which social theory had once focused (STANFORD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PHILOSOPHY, 2007)

In the postmodern universe, virtual creation is truer than the natural and predetermined creation and with which we confront ourselves as soon as we see the world: "the realm of the hyperreal [...] is more real than real, whereby the models, images, and codes of the hyperreal begin to control thought and behaviour" (*idem, ibidem*). Man creates, reproduces whatever his "I" and his world. In this sense, it can be said that Baudrillard's hyperreal universe is nothing less than a world in which: "entertainment, information, and communication technologies provide more intense and involving experiences than the scenes of everyday life, the codes and models that structure everyday life" (*ibidem*).

Baudrillard also speaks in a “communication ecstasy” and explains that this effect has to do with the fact that the individual is wrapped in a “super approximation” to the information and imaging compositions that come to us through technology. The influence of machine and technology on man results in a loss of control on the part of man:

in the media and consumer society, people are caught up in the play of images, spectacles, and simulacra, that have less and less relationship to an outside, to an external “reality” [...] the narcotized and mesmerized media-saturated consciousness is in such a state of fascination with image and spectacle that the concept of meaning itself dissolves (STANFORD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PHILOSOPHY, 2007)

The logic of Marxist or modernist conception is reversed, in which the individual controlled the object, to a postmodernist logic in which precisely the opposite occurs: the fragmentation of the subject and the domination of the same by the object, its creation/creature. The simulation of reality itself reaches such a point that we begin to question ourselves: what is real and what is simulacrum? As the simulations happen, individualities dissolve and we lose “as simulations proliferate, they come to refer only to themselves: a carnival of mirrors reflecting images projected from other mirrors” (*Idem, ibidem*).

The “desert of the real” is one of the author’s best-known premises and is quite explicit in *Simulacra and Simulation* when Baudrillard writes:

Today abstraction is no longer that of a map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a

hyper real. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is never the less the map that precedes the territory – *precession of simulacra* – that engenders the territory, and if one must return to the fable, today it is the territory whose shreds slowly rot a cross the extent of the map. It is the real and not the map, whose vestiges persist here and there in the deserts that are no longer those of the Empire, but ours. *The desert of the real itself* (BAUDRILLARD, 1994, p. 1)

Baudrillard also writes: “to dissimulate is to pretend not to have what one has. To simulate is to feign to have what one doesn’t have. One implies a presence, the other an absence” (*ibidem*, p.3). The author argues that in Postmodernity everything “is a matter of replacing reality with the signs of reality. There is no “sense of reality” that can cover up the hoax, the postmodern culture itself is artificial ... we have lost all ability to distinguish its nature because we fabricate a hyperreal civilization that constructs illusory scenarios” (BAUDRILLARD *apud* MOREIRA, 2005, p. 195).

Thus, he explains, in *Simulacra and Simulation*:

Such is simulation, in so far as it is opposed to representation. Representation stems from the principle of the equivalence of the sign and of the real (even if this equivalence is utopian). Simulation, on the contrary, stems from the utopia of the principle of equivalence, *from the radical negation of the sign as value*, from the sign as the reversion and death sentence of every reference. Where a representation attempts to absorb simulation by interpreting it as false representation, simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation itself as a simulacrum (p. 6)

3. Matrix

The cinematographic work, *Matrix* (1999), by the Wachowski brothers, is inspired by the ideas and theories of Baudrillard, who was not at all satisfied with portraying his essay in this way. As Thiry-Cherques (2010) explains, “his essay on how the mass media produces virtual reality inspired the directors of *The Matrix* trilogy. The philosopher was then invited to participate, to give the motto, to provide the essence that would give rise to a cinematographic work that sought to portray and to show to society what Baudrillard had theorized: the duality between real and virtual and, especially, the choice of the individual before the two worlds, however, the philosopher did not accept the position of consultant that had been done to him. What happens then in this cinematographic work?

Hacker hero Neo (Keanu Reeves) hides his contraband software in a hollowed-out copy of one of the philosopher’s books, and rebel chief Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne) quotes Baudrillard’s most famous formula: “Welcome to the desert of the real”. (*THE GUARDIAN*, 2007)

As *The Guardian* reports, the film talks about “a near future where society is a machine-determined simulation that keeps us as slaves” (2007). In *Matrix*, Neo is the wanderer, an “anomalous, this boundary between two worlds, who must, at a moment, make his choice”.

Massagli, in his article “Cultural identities in the desert of the hyperreal in the movie *Matrix*, speaks in the form” of how postmodern experience displaces subjectivity and interferes with the constitution of a stable and centered modern subject, insofar as this subject, (2008, p. 371), something that Baudrillard clearly advocated. In *Matrix*, Neo faces a dilem-

ma that completely and literally changes the reason for its existence: the protagonist needs to meet and for this, he needs to realize what is and is not real. On the one hand, the normal life of an individual named Thomas Anderson, a programmer in a reputed software company and another, a dark life as a hacker and under the nickname Neo. Here we can see the fluidity between two identities, one real and one virtual, but throughout the film, there are several situations that refer us to these fluctuations between two worlds: “the characters travel between the” real “and the” virtual “world through cables and telephone lines all the time; the agents of the Matrix can be anyone; any person can be an agent of the Matrix” (*ibidem*, p. 374).

Massagli explains that “we are facing a new way of thinking, feeling and behaving ... between pure multiplicity and the exceptional individual: what exactly is the nature of the anomalous? What role would he have in relation to the pack?” (2008, p. 374). In *Matrix*, Neo is the “exceptional individual”, the “solitary” in relation to the “bando” (*Idem, ibidem*) and, in this way, using the words of the author, we ask: “what function does Neo have for what is left of reality, for those who are somehow not trapped in the virtual cage of the Matrix?” (*ibidem*).

Morpheus firmly believes that Neo is the “Chosen One”, someone who exists with the purest of missions, which implies a choice between the virtual universe, where he can make his own decisions, be he to determine his own existence, or, on the other hand, to continue giving in and accepting the pre-determinations imposed by the Matrix. Neo is nothing less than “this limit point between two worlds, which must, at one moment, make its choice” (MASSAGLI, 2008, p. 374). An example of this is when Neo consults the Oracle and comes across the Enigma of Delphi: “Know thy-

self” (ibidem). The protagonist then needs to discover at once his world and therefore his identity.

In *Matrix*, and according to Espanha & Poupinha, (2005, p.1086), the question of the “construction process of the real” is portrayed in a “total” form, since in this history “the historical evolution of humanity is itself producer of built reality. The loss of control of technological evolution makes this technology autonomous and domineering. Humanity becomes matter and is neither form nor content, which is provided by the “builders of reality” (ibidem). What is supposed to be the step to freedom, to happiness, to an experience completely detached from conventions, is also a step towards the discovery of oneself:

in all processes of discouragement of a given notion of real ... the idea of happiness is something that becomes lost, since it is only in situations where one is involved in a matrix or, at times, is seeking to belong to a given reality that the idea of happiness is present, present or potentially, always through the path of desire or illusion (ESPANHA; POUPINHA, 2005, p. 1089)

Right at the beginning of the film, we can see, along with Neo, the message he receives: “The Matrix has you ...”. Being the Matrix a virtual world conceived by Artificial Intelligence, Neo finds himself living in a pure illusion of reality: “Welcome, to the desert of the real,” Morpheus tells Neo by showing him the city of Chicago in the future (DEVI, 2008, p. 5):

The character Morpheus acts as a kind of Hyper real theorist and takes Neo and the audience through various kinds of illusions and representations that they encounter in their everyday life. Morpheus tells Neo, “I promised you the truth, Neo, and the truth is that

the world you were living in was a lie”. (DEVI, 2008, p. 4)

Baudrillard considers that in Post-modernity, everything loses its meaning, generating an emptiness of everything: “everything is empty and has lost its meaning” (ibidem, p. 5). However, the film does not portray a conclusion that encompasses this vision, but conveys the message that one day we will all find our way and everything will make sense:

The film ends positively, with Neo saying, “I’m going to show them a world without you. A world without rules and controls, without borders and boundaries. A world where anything is possible. Where we go from there is a choice I leave to you.” This shows that the people in future will understand the virtual medium better and will try to control the simulations instead of being a slave to images (DEVI, 2008, p. 5)

Neo is learning to know himself, and at the end of the film he realizes the whole process of knowing himself: “we see the slow transition from Neo from an ordinary hacker to a superman like a saviour” (ibidem, p. 5-6), but until then there is much to come.

One of the key scenes of the film is the moment in which Morpheus tells and shows to Neo that the world in which he has lived is a lie, a staging, a kind of product. *The Matrix* is the creation of a matrix, a pattern generated by Artificial Intelligence and that forces us to live according to certain norms. During the conversation between the two, Morpheus tells Neo: “I see in your eyes, you have the look of a man who accepts what he sees, because he is waiting to wake up, ironically, it is still true. Do you believe in fate, Neo?” To which he replies not because he does not like to think that he does not control his life. Morpheus

responds: *"I know exactly what you mean, I'll tell you why it's here. You know something, cannot explain what, but you feel, you've felt your whole life. There is something wrong with the world, you do not know what it is, but there is, like a buzzing in your head driving you crazy, it was that feeling that brought you to me. Do you know what I'm talking about?"* Neo really wants to find out what the Matrix is and will finally know, *"The Matrix is everywhere, around us, even now, in this room, you can see it when you look out the window, the When you turn on your television, you feel when you go to work, when you go to church, when you pay your taxes. It is the world that was placed before your eyes so that you would not see the truth."* Neo becomes increasingly confused, not knowing what to think, and Morpheus continues: *"You are a slave, like everyone else, you were born in captivity, you were born in a prison you cannot feel or touch, a prison for your mind. Unfortunately, it is impossible to tell what the Matrix is. You have to see for yourself"* (MOREIRA, 2005, p. 189-190).

According to Moreira, as in the Allegory of Plato's Cave, "Neo equals the prisoners of the cave, but what he discovers is not properly a kingdom blessed with forms, pure and gleaming in beauty. On the contrary, it finds the earth devastated by nuclear winter, the fruit of the war between man and machine, a reality lived in the centre of the Earth" (MOREIRA, 2005, p. 193). Once released from the cave, the human will face "a world that he does not recognize and does not believe. Free, he suffers, for he does not accept that which, for him, is not the true nature of reality" (*ibidem*).

Cypher is another of the characters that equal these prisoners:

You know, I know this steak does not exist. I know that when I put it in

my mouth, Matrix tells my brain that it is juicy and delicious. After nine years, do you know what I realized? Ignorance is wonderful (MOREIRA, 2005, p. 193)

Cypher had already been in the Matrix, from which he was freed. However, she repents because she is not happy in a reality that is not her own. Cypher prefers not to have to decide what he knows his steak, prefers the "wonderful ignorance" of not knowing the object that has before him, preferring to be the object to determine his world. Yet, as Moreira questions, "does Cypher, when he opts for" ignorance, "give up his supposed freedom or only make his free choice?" (MOREIRA, 2005, p. 197). That is the question...

Neo, at some point, also felt a need to know if he could return to his reality if he wanted to: "I cannot go back, can I?", He asks. really want to? ", Morpheus replies" (MERRIN, 2003, p.2).

Neo is doubtful and divided about what is and is not real and Morpheus challenges him: "What is real?" How do you define real? you can taste and see, then real is simply electrical signals interpreted by your brain" (*idem, ibidem*). If we go back to the beginning of the film, when Choi appears at Neo's house, and where we see Baudrillard's first influence on the film (Neo saves his experiences as a hacker inside a box that is nothing more than the book *Simulacra and Simulation* but no pages), there are already obvious signs of the non-distinction between being asleep or awake, when Neo asks Choi: "have you ever had that feeling where you're sure you're awake or still dreaming?" Later, on meeting Morpheus, he asks her: "If the virtual reality apparatus was wired to all of your senses and controlled them completely, would you be able to tell the difference between the virtual world and the real

world?” Neo responds: “You might not,” and Morpheus agrees: “No you would not, unless you were woken.” We reach the eternal question: what is and what is not real?

5. Conclusions

In summary, we can quote Moreira when he writes:

Simulating does not mean duplicating, but attuning to our desires and purposes. In Matrix, we see that the year 2199 simulates the reality of 1999 with some “extras”. In the course of the film, we do not see crimes and poverty, because hunger and crime are not the objectives of machines that, on the contrary, have programmed a docile population (MOREIRA, s / d, p. 197).

As can be seen throughout our work, all these questions involve a key factor: subjectivity. What for some may be real, for others it may not be. The question of identities has always been a complex and meaningful question. Each one decides who he wants to be and how he wants to guide his world. If it was already in the physical world, in the virtual world this situation is accentuated. In addition to our earthly identity, we have the possibility of extending it to the virtualities of the Web, being ourselves or even inventing new and different identities. In this sense, it can be said that Matrix constitutes a film that, within the presuppositions of the philosophy and the characteristics of the Science Fiction, corresponds in many details to this question. In this way, it is the kind of film that should be considered in studies that refer to the question of identity inside and outside cyberspace for its imagery richness, but also in terms of its messages and meanings.

Morpheus makes it clear to Neo: “you have lived in a dream world, Neo. As in Baudrillard’s conception, his whole life has been spent on a map, not on the territory” (Moreira, p. 192). But as we have seen, the similarities between Baudrillard’s conceptions did not always co-exist. While the philosopher characterized post-modernism, governed by technology and media that sucked the senses, in the film there is the idea that more day less day we will all leave the Matrix, governed by Artificial Intelligence, to migrate to virtual reality, where we are shaping everything according to our wishes.

Each one of us owns a kind of truth and, at this time, the question remains: is there, in fact, freedom? If it exists, where can we find it?

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