

Pomo at the Movies

“The Truman Show” can be analyzed as a thesis on existentialism, Christianity, and simulated reality. The show chronicles the life of Truman Burbank who is in the beginning unconscious that he’s living in a structured reality television show that is broadcasted to billions of people all over the world on a daily basis. Modern technology of hidden cameras has been applied in the show so that Christof can be able to capture the human behaviour and real emotions of Truman when subjected to certain situations. The same technology has been used to broadcast these live events around the globe. However, just like in the modern society where bus breakdowns and inconveniences are the order of the day, Truman is unable to get away from Seahaven simply because he’s not in a position to arrange for flights, unexpected traffic masses, and obvious nuclear meltdown. In this context, the events revolving around Truman’s life are quite similar to those of other main characters in drama television shows or movies. Most people live explicitly through their much-loved television characters but to a certain degree all people are television characters since they are also manipulated by the media.

The Truman reality television show is probably set in modern times although things like fashion appears to be more of the 50’s styles. The women in the show prepare dinner and watch over the children as the men report work, this is very traditional. However, there are some career women like Meryl who is an actress supposed to be Truman’s wife. In order to keep Truman from finding out that his life is a lie and a television show, Christof ensures that all the magazines, TV shows, and radio are made purposely for him (Sutherland, 2004, p.68). Thus, just like in the modern world where people believe that which their parents and educators have taught them, Truman believes in everything that has been portrayed as the reality. The subjective truth model has been used for validity testing just like in the modern world. For instance, Truman is water-phobic simply because he has been given enough reasons why he ought to avoid it yet it’s nothing but a trick to keep him away from escaping. Nevertheless, Christof feels that the traditional forms of literature are outdated and probably that’s why he directs a show that is a metaphor. Truman lives in a world that is within another but apparently he’s not aware that an outside world exists. In reference to the modern world life, people make efforts to achieve their dreams without being aware of what tomorrow might bring. Consequently, Truman maybe considered as a true man because he overcomes his fears and decides to leave Seahaven (Sutherland, 2004, p.54). Unquestionably, Truman is running to the unknown so as to avoid taking responsibility of his new life. As a result, The Truman Show which appears to be a trendy post-modern film on the subject of subjectivity is in point of fact a modern movie tying into the front line meta-narrative in which the social order represents a binding world. In this case, the border line embodies the male escapist dream of no responsibility. However, two worlds exist in The Truman Show which includes the controlled society where Truman exists in a cage and the changeable “outside world” that Truman only discovers towards the end of the film. Fundamentally, the two worlds in the film are correspondingly synonymous with ‘real society’.

“The Truman Show” can be considered as post-modern because the main character “Truman” places a challenge on the director “Christof”. Apparently Truman doesn’t recognize that some people possess more power than others and that’s why he’s not afraid of challenging Christof’s decisions. As a matter of fact, he makes it clear to Christof that he does not want to be caged and needs to regain his freedom. Christof insists on Truman marrying Meryl just because she’s has a career as an actress. Basically, Truman doesn’t believe in the sharp classification of successful and unsuccessful people in the society and that’s why the idea of Meryl being a successful career woman doesn’t click him. Concurrently, when Christof discovers that Truman has intentions of leaving Seahaven, he brings back his father in order to stop him (Sutherland, 2004, p.53). Nevertheless, this only provides a temporary respite since Truman isolates himself and starts living in the basement.

Consequently, Truman gets motivated and successfully challenges Christof when he manages to escape undetected through a secret tunnel. Surprisingly, Christof is forced to temporarily suspend the show broadcast for the first time. Post-modernism is quite evident in this show because the main character is determined to challenge people who are more powerful than him. Moreover, Truman is a born character living in a fictional life believing it was reality unlike in most modern television shows where the actors/actresses aim at entertaining the audience. On the other hand, the film captures the issues brought up by the practical postmodernism strand. The film demonstrates that the edges between reality and entertainment in a world where all discourses are similar are blurred.

Truman is a good example of a post-modernist. For instance, he tries to challenge Christof’s ideas and decisions when he discovers that his life is nothing but a global television show. This is because Truman doesn’t believe that there is classification of power and that some people can be more powerful than others. In addition, Truman is initially in denial of objective truth because he convinces himself that he’s living in reality when his life is nothing but a lie. In contrast, Christof may be considered as a modernist because he directs a television show based on

somebody's real life. Christof feels that the traditional form of film making are outdated in the new technologically advanced world and that's why he tries to come up with a real life television show. In fact, he sets hidden cameras in the place where Truman has been confined and even fakes the death of Truman's father so as to scare him off (Sutherland, 2004, p.87).

Moreover, Sylvia may also be considered as a post-modernist since she also tries to challenge Christof. When Christof puts her in the show, Sylvia falls in love with Truman and even tries to disclose to him the truth about his life. Thus, she protests against the show after being thrown out. Moreover, Sylvia motivates Truman in getting out of Seahaven because she's against the objective truth of Truman living a lie just for Christof to create a reality TV show (Sutherland, 2004, p.102). On the other hand, Meryl, Truman's wife is an example of a modernist. Since her childhood, Meryl wished to be an actress and even though she didn't make it into the film industry, she has found herself a nursing job. Meryl plays the role of a family woman who is also a career woman just like it is in the modern society.

References

Sutherland, V. (2004).The Truman show directed by Peter Weir. Sydney: Pascal Press.