

Plato's allegory of the cave and the Truman show assignment

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The final culmination of *The Truman Show* comes only after Truman faces his greatest fear, in pursuit of the truth. Truman clearly plays the part of the prisoner, unaware that his hometown, Shaven Island, is actually a television studio. Christofis orchestrates every moment and movement on the studio set and effectively carries the other characters, as do the men passing along the wall behind the prisoners creating shadows. All of the people who inhabit Shaven Island act as shadows in Trauma's cave.

The most important people to Truman, Meryl, Maroon, and his mother, also take the part of shadows in some parts of the movie. While the people of Shaven, including those closest to Truman, play the part of the shadows, they also sometimes share characteristics of the cave's other prisoners.

Throughout Trauma's life, his natural instincts to explore and seek knowledge have been quickly squashed by whomever was present when he expresses these interests. This includes anyone from an elementary school teacher to his best friend and wife.

The memory of Sylvia, the woman he quickly fell for, is the truth or knowledge that drives Truman to really break free, in the end. When the movie begins, Truman has long had the seeds of his impending ascent to knowledge lying in wait. As a young man, he met and quickly fell for a woman by the name of Sylvia. Due to the nature of Trauma's life, she was not allowed to talk to him and was quickly taken away by someone claiming to be her father. When Truman asks where he is taking her, the father quips back, "Fiji". From that day forth, a trip to Fiji is always at the back of Trauma's mind.

This trip would be his escape from the cave he is not yet aware he inhabits. This experience of his with Sylvia sets him on edge with the feeling that he wants to get as far away from Shaven as possible. For many years, his feeling remains a low-level underlying feeling. Finally, an event so bizarre that can not be explained away occurs. One morning on the way to work, Truman runs into his father. This would be a fairly normal occurrence, except his father had died in a boating accident with Truman twenty years earlier.

The actor who played Trauma's father sneaked onto the set, which they reacted to in a similar manner to Sylvia and Trauma's moment together. Security guards swooped in and forced him onto a bus, stopping Truman from speaking to him. This shocking event increased the mount of energy that Truman put into his pursuit of the truth. After encountering his father, Truman begins studying his surroundings and discovering patterns in his environment that he never seemed to notice before. He also becomes more persistent when someone tries to explain away strange occurrences.

Merely, Trauma's wife, often speaks to the camera about products they use around the home. While these product placements went unnoticed the rest of his life, Truman becomes increasingly agitated and suspicious of his wife when she performs these live commercials. On the way o work one morning, Trauma's car radio begins playing the frequency the studio was using to alert all the actors to his whereabouts. The studio quickly attempts to cover up the mistake, but not well enough because from then on Truman is truly spooked.

At this point things begin to spiral pretty quickly out of control. Instead of going to work Truman heads home and sits in his car for hours. In doing so, he picks up on patterns in both the pedestrian and vehicle traffic passing by his home. When Merely arrives home, she finds Truman holed up in the car acting erratically, due to this discovery. Trauma's need to understand and escape continues growing stronger. Along with noticing patterns in his environment, Truman begins seeking out ways to leave Shaven. His initial instinct is to plan a trip to Fiji.

However, when he attempts to schedule a vacation through the travel agency, he is told there are no available flights for months. Next, Truman purchases a ticket for a bus trip to Chicago. As soon as he boards the bus, the bus mysteriously begins having engine troubles and the trip is canceled. In a panic, Truman attempts to escape in his car while driving with Merely. He has never before river across the bridge out of town, due to his intense fear of water, but this time he mashes his foot on the pedal and instructs Merely to steer.

Trauma's desperation to escape Shaven has grown to the point of willingness to endanger his life to find out what the truth is about life outside of the cave. When all of these various attempts to leave town fail, Truman realizes he is going to have to get creative and also face his biggest fear. Here we reach the crescendo of the movie. Truman is found sailing away from Shaven, despite his fear of water. Christofis uses intense storms, unsuccessfully, to send Truman running for the safety he has always known.

Truman has, at this point in the movie, truly shed the chains, in the form of his fear of water, and is headed straight for the truth. As he reaches the edge of the studio and makes his literal ascent up the stairs to exit, Christofis offers him a choice. Truman has to choose between leaving the controlled safety of everything he has ever known and knowing what is true. He chooses to exit and finally be free, despite the fact that the world outside of his cave will be awfully bright and it will take him time to adjust and understand the new truths he encounters.