

Peter weir movie analysis



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In 1998 Peter Weir released, *The Truman Show*, an ingenious movie that urged viewers to reflect on ethics related to modern day television programmes and the media. His latest movie, released in 2003, *Master and Commander* was a gentleman's action movie. Although the latter was much more entertaining, it is a movie that corresponds meticulously to Hollywood formulas. *The Truman show* is a movie that doesn't relate to Hollywood formulas but does the complete opposite. Truman Burbank's character doesn't conform to that of a traditional Hollywood hero. For example, in the opening scene of *The Truman Show*, Truman is shown as being unimportant and ordinary when he's staring at himself in the mirror and muttering insanelly " the only way.. ...reachdischarge.....supplies". In *Master and Commander*, Jack Aubrey is shown striding around and giving commands in sailor jargon " Hard to the lardboard, Mr Warley! Luff, luff, and shake her!" What Jack says is heard to show his importance as a heroic figure. Unlike Jack, " Truman is not the usual Hollywood hero, he is not too clever, or too handsome, or too well built to be anything other than ordinary". He is portrayed as the " epitome of ordinariness" Truman's character does not conform to that of a traditional Hollywood hero because he is normal. Truman is ordinary, but he's depicted as being different from the actors. He is illustrated as being different by fundamental behavioural differences, for example when the bus breaks down, the bus driver says " I'm sorry" and everyone except for Truman homogeneously gets off the bus, Truman sits there angrily like standard Homo Sapiens. Truman and the actors are like chalk and cheese because he is the only " True man" while the rest are all fake. In contrast, Jack is similar to his seamen, he mixes in well with his seamen and he's bound with comradeship to his seamen. This is more like

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Hollywood formulas. Truman's catch phrase " Good morning, and just in case I don't see you good afternoon, good evening and good night" sets him worlds apart from the actors in Seahaven. Throughout the movie Weir is conveying to the audience that the Hollywood film industry is false. In the opening scene of The Truman Show, Marlon says ironically " It's all real, nothings fake", but later on in the movie the truth is gradually revealed about " Seahaven". The question the movie asks you is " Can Truman escape from the ever present camera surveillance of Seahaven?" On the contrary in Master and Commander the question asked is " Can the Acheron escape from the ever present surveillance of the heroic Jack Aubrey?" which relates more to Hollywood formulas. Weir expects us to cheer for Truman and he does this by having an audience watching an audience, watching The Truman show. Remember our friend in the bathtub, a Truman fan, who watched The Truman Show for three days continuously. Who else caught a glimpse into Truman's life? Weren't we there? Weir cleverly brings up the issue of ethics and how reality shows are diminishing the remaining ethical values of people. In Master and Commander Weir brings up nothing worth thinking about. However he introduces Francophobia into the audience's minds. His reason being France's opposition to George Bush's gang war against Iraq. What The Truman Show does is pose questions about nature of privacy, identity and ethics, while still being moderately entertaining. Yes, it would be horrible trapped in a dome populated with folks that are paid to pretend to be your friends, but that's what makes The Truman Show different to the Master and Commander which merely follows Hollywood formulas.