

The Truman show sociological perspective essay sample

[Media](#), [Television](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Truman Show/Sociological Perspective Essay Sample

The movie *The Truman Show* is a compelling movie about the affects of a controlled society on an individual. This movie stars Jim Cary as Truman Burbank and is set in modern-day reality. The hypothesis of the movie is a mammoth sociological experiment involving this man named Truman.

Truman is born and raised on a gigantic movie set. Truman's every action, since his birth, is documented in the form of a television reality show. Every aspect of Truman's life has been preconditioned since his birth. This preconditioning is much like how society teaches children today; the only difference with Truman is his life is much more controlled. One's culture is the totality of customs learned like ideas, values, and knowledge (Schaefer, 2003).

Truman's culture and norms were taught to him based on what Christoph, the director in the movie, thought was an ideal society. Truman's social location is even chosen for him as the movie reveals he is a white male salesman earning a modest income. The most interesting twist to the movie is Truman's life is broadcast worldwide much like the reality shows of today. The Truman show examines how society has a propensity to accept the reality that we live in, and how we become products of society and other sociological viewpoints.

Events Based on Sociological views

The Truman show demonstrates how much society affects the behaviors of the individuals who live inside of it. Throughout the movie Christoph

conditions Truman to be afraid of sailing, swimming, or traveling to far off places. In the movie Truman's father is shown to have died in a massive storm by way of drowning. Because the set is a huge island, Christoph set it up so that Truman will never be able to leave because of his fear of water. Christoph also uses this very fear of water by placing posters with airplane crashes and other warnings of the dangers of traveling throughout the travel agency walls. With each of these subtle signs, Christoph is using various forms of deterrence so Truman does not want to leave his island home. Christoph continually creates fears in Truman and reinforces his contentment of staying home as opposed to traveling the world.

Christoph uses conformity to direct the path that he has chosen for Truman's life in the show. Conformity is simply a pathway of actions that people follow in a group or society (Schaefer, 2003). Conformity is evident when Truman boards a bus and tries to escape the island. The bus breaks down and everyone who is on the bus stands up and leaves as if nothing is wrong. Christoph, who controls Truman's life hopes that Truman will consider the situation as normal because people conform to other people's actions. But Truman is much smarter than Christoph anticipated and figures out that something is not quite right. Truman realizes that someone is either watching him or trying to control his surroundings.

The Control theory can be directly related to the Truman Show. The theory states that conformity and deviance that advocate one's connections to members of society leads an individual to conform to the norms of that society (Schaefer, 2003). Christoph uses this to his advantage by using his

ideas of right and wrong to influences to mold Truman into the person he has become in the movie. Christoph uses outside factors to control Truman's world like Truman's family and friends to influence his thoughts, behaviors, and actions. As Truman becomes more aware of these outside factors, he starts to deviate from the norms of his society. Truman begins to have a sense of anomie to his world and begins to become less of a part of his society.

Truman begins to find less comfort in his family, friends, and co-workers and begin to resist the society that Christoph built for him. Instead of conforming to the life a middle class businessman, Truman begins to act unpredictable and illogical. In normal society Truman's behaviors would be considered deviant; the actors portraying family and friends are told to ignore Truman's behaviors so Truman will change what he suspects. Truman soon realizes that his defiant behaviors are ignored and this is when he begins to realize that something is very wrong. Christoph realizes that this is a problem for him and does everything he can to stop Truman's odd behaviors, but this only reinforces Truman's suspicions that he is just a pawn in the big picture.

Sociological Viewpoint Used

The Truman show can be viewed from the functionalist viewpoint. The Truman show served a greater society; television plays a powerful role in the influencing of behaviors in individuals. Christoph used the Truman show to show society how they should act toward one another. Every person shows curtesy toward each other. Crime was not a part of what the Truman show

was about and this pattern of behavior showed the world what it could be like without all the violence that inhabits societies today. The Truman show served as a perfect world for those watching while they lived in an imperfect one. The Truman show gave society a peek at what a perfect world would be like. This was the foremost draw of the show and many shows like it. Society tends to live vicariously through shows like the Truman show.

Specific Examples

The Truman show had a few classic roles that were played. Truman's class was that of a white collared worker. Truman's role in his society was to go to work in a suit and tie, sell insurance, and obey the social norms. Truman's wife's status in the movie is to be a housewife and a nurse. His wife's primary role includes nursing, cooking, and cleaning. Along with her role was the importance of being up-to-date on all the latest products. The status of Truman's best friend was giving Truman advice, laughing, and caring for his emotional needs. Of course all the roles and statuses in the Truman show were controlled by Christoph yet Truman realizes all of this and had a major mental breakdown.

The ending of Truman takes an interesting turn by Truman rejecting the very society that he lived in all his life. Truman discounts all the norms, customs, and beliefs to enter an unfamiliar world. The movie Truman portrays this as conquering adversity, but in reality this would be difficult for a person to do. Individuals could not easily refuse the reality they have known their entire life. The fear of the unknown beyond our social norms would be a problem

for most people in today's world. People believe that where they live, their customs, and their norms are the same everywhere. Truman's desire was to explore other societies for himself and make his own assumptions about them.

References

Schaefer, R. T., (2003). *Sociology: a brief introduction* (5th ed). Boston: McGraw-Hill. Retrieved February 14, 2010, from University of Phoenix, eResource. SOC/100- Introduction to Sociology.