

Analyse the structural and presentational devices used by the director peter weir...

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The film, ' The Truman Show', is very successful for many reasons.

It is a film about a man who leads what seems to himself to be a normal life on the island called Seahaven; he has a loving wife, a best friend, and a mother who he can confide in. But something is wrong with his life, at first he is unable to find the truth behind the set he has grown up to call home, but soon he comes to the realization that he is the central device of a world far beyond his imagination. The film consists of a reality television show of his everyday life which has been aired since he was developing inside of his mother's womb. Just as the reality hit television show aired today, Big Brother, his every move, his every word and his every breath is caught by these tiny hidden cameras.

Truman is the main character in the television show, who is trapped in the false paradises and settings of illusion of this idyllic island town. Peter Weir, the director of the film, in showing us just how we react when characters, in this case Truman, fight to free themselves from prisons disguised as ideal places, presents a world of deceit. The world in which Truman was presented throughout his life was a world which he accepted, just as we have, Truman accepted the surroundings in which he saw, because to him, it was normal, it was home. The name ' Seahaven' suggests a place of fantasy. It consists of the words; sea and haven.

Sea showing the fact that this tiny island is surrounded by water and haven which portrays the heavenly appearance of the actually island. The island is completely clean and has a continuous cheerful atmosphere about it. It has such a cheerful atmosphere that it's perfect. It's abit too perfect. The

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structural view of the island is one of which we could only imagine from reading books. It is a complete world of fantasia.

The main characters within 'The Truman Show' all have been given certain names with certain significance behind them. Truman was given this name because he is the only 'true-man' in the story of the television programme, everyone else are thespians, people who are putting on a show for the television audience and people who are putting on a show to make Truman's life seem as normal as possible. Meryl, Truman's wife and teenage sweetheart, is an actress who must act twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week for Truman as she lives with him, she was given this name to represent that she is as great an actress as Meryl Streep, an actress who has wowed screens for over twenty years. Marlon, Truman's best friend, was given this name, after Marlon Brando, because whenever Truman needs a friend to talk to, Marlon is the one who can manipulate Truman into thinking he is the one he can turn to, to talk to about anything. In doing this Truman himself, without knowing, is creating the television show.

In this way, the television programme is the structural device within the film. Christof, the director of the television show within the film was given this precise name by Peter Weir because he plays god within the film, he tells everyone what to say, what to do and what to wear, without him the show would be like the outside life, messy and uncoordinated. Christof constructs Seahaven as a perfect little fortress for Truman. It's clean, it's bright and it's friendly. Everyday, Christof would tell every actor, every citizen, of the show what to wear, and how to act that day.

But as Truman isn't part of the show as an actor, he isn't told what to do or what to wear, so while watching the movie as a film audience, we can clearly see the difference the control makes. When told what to wear, the citizens or characters should I say, wear cartoony type colours, to give a 50's style sense. This is because when thinking about the 50's, a sense of friendly-ness and brightness comes to mind. The costumes of the 'controlled' people portray a friendly, honest and helpful person. The Truman Show' is funded by product placement, everything you see in the Truman show is for sale, and if you look carefully, many people are advertising new equipment, new food, and new drinks. This is another major structural device within the film.

Without it, spectators of the film would ponder on how such a set could be supported. Whenever the actors would promote new products within the market, you could see confusion in Truman's expression. He would wonder what or who his wife or his best friend Marlon were talking to when they came up with bizarre comments about hot chocolate or a beer. But surprisingly, not even this had Truman wondering about his real surroundings, he ignored it and carried on with normal life but never actually gave it any second thought, until weird occurrences began to happen around the town. Within the film, television audiences around the world enjoy the 24-7 melodramatic comedy. They all enjoy watching Truman through his times of sadness and happiness, but never seem to show any sympathy for the man that they have been intruding upon since he was born.

The audience tend to enjoy the mistreatment and dishonesty Truman experiences within the show. Within the film we see many different

techniques in which Christof, the director of the show, forms various intense moments within the show. He uses music and different camera angles to help in the gradual increase of tension. When Truman's father is re-introduced into the show, Christof uses music, in major key, to show happiness, and portrays Truman's feelings by using an extreme close-up focussing on the tears running from Truman's eyes.

This causes the audience to feel a sense of catharsis. At the end of the film, Truman eventually made it out of the dome which kept him prisoner for so long. The last thing he said was ' Good Morning, and if I don't see you, Good afternoon, Good Evening and Good Night', a phrase he regularly said to his neighbours and friends. And when he did, the audience were left with the biggest sense of catharsis. Many viewers were left happy that he had finally escaped, and others just simply changed the channel. This showed that they were happy watching whatever was on, that they didn't really need a 24-7 show.

In this film the particular thing that interested me was media of the show. How they fitted media within media, to show people acting just how we do when a new reality television show comes along. It makes you think, how would you feel if you found out your life was nothing but entertainment for people all around the world? How would you react if you realised that the horizon you thought would take you into the wide world was just a wall that simply had a door that you had the choice of walking out of? What would you do? What would you say? Highlighted in pink are bits I have added.

Highlighted in red are mistakes I could have checked for.