The Theory Of Hyperrealism In The Truman Show

'There is no more truth out there than there is in the world I created for you. The same lies, the same deceit. But in my world, you have nothing to fear.' Christof: Creator of The Truman Show.

Peter Weir's 1988 drama/fantasy film The Truman Show explores the life of a man who has lived in a fake world his whole life. Truman Burbank, played by Jim Carey, is entirely unaware of the fact that he has been the star of a world-famous TV show since birth. He was born and raised in a synthetic world known as Hollywood's largest studio, formed in such a way as a village called Seahaven. Throughout the movie, Truman attempts to discover the truth and tries to escape the world he lives in. The Truman Show embodies the ideals of Jean Baudrillard's Theory of Postmodernism, emphasizing hyperreality.

Hyperreality, in postmodernism, is an inability of consciousness to distinguish reality from a simulation of reality, especially in technologically advanced postmodern societies. French philosopher Jean Baudrillard originally coined such a concept as part of his theory, the role simulacrum, plays in structuring our lives. A simulacrum is a representation or imitation of a person or thing. Simulacra are copies that depict things that either had no original or that no longer have an original, such as Disneyland. Baudrillard gave this example to explain the sameness between the world and Disneyland. For him, mature people behave like a child in Disneyland and thus they suppose that they are not behaving babyish in ‘real’ life

Hyperreality is seen as a condition in which what is real and what is fiction are seamlessly blended together so that there is no clear distinction between where one ends and the other begins. This lack of clarity makes us as a society similar to the main character of the Truman show. In fact, Truman presents the perfect metaphor for our situation. We are living in an era where people are questioning everything to find out the truth. This era is controlled by the various media and social networks and the uncertainty that comes with them. Are we under the surveillance of machines and technology? How do we know what we experience is not a simulation? We are subjected to the uncertainty of a fake world. The Truman Show is used to present the possible reality of this world. Films like The Truman Show display the idea of hyperreality in a clear cut way as Truman inhabits the physical distortion (simulacrum) of reality which is the show. Seahaven, the place Truman lives, appears to be even better than real life because it is all fake. It is the world that Christof created for Truman. However, it is no more than a fabricated set filled with actors. Seahaven is the representation of the way Christof imagined a perfect world. Seahaven can be compared with the Disney community created in Celebration, Florida. Celebration is a master planned community in the United States located near the Walt Disney World Resort and was regionally developed by the Walt Disney Company.

The Truman Show is an indictment of Walt Disney's town of celebration and its calculated complexion of nostalgia marketing. Both communities play to be real, and the residents play their role in their high inclusive community. In Celebration, the citizens decide to become live performers in Disney's show, which makes them very similar to the actors in The Truman Show. SHOW VIDEO OF TRUMAN PEOPLE SAYING ITS REAL. In both Seahaven and Celebration, it appears to be more important to uphold the structure of hyperreality and illusion than to live a real and authentic life in a genuine and authentic town. Likewise, Seahaven and Celebration are

constructed to modify feelings and behaviours through design features such as coloured and varied architecture schemes creating a sense of local identity, character and history. This works as the real world, and everyday places seem depressing in comparison to the beautiful towns. Each place works to keep the illusion of perfection in and the real world outside. Quote by Christof about keeping the outside world out and Truman in. Everything will be perfect in these places, but the real question is choosing between the hyperreality and the real mediocrity or normality.

Although everything about Truman's life is carefully crafted, the guy caught in a life he can't escape starts questioning the meaning of his 'reality'. Truman can't find what kind of life he is living and what is real and what is fiction becomes blurred for him. He is like a puppet of that show's creator. In a scene, he tries to find Fiji Island, which is the place of his ex-girlfriend who has warned him that he is in a TV show and is being watched by others. At that moment, the creator forces Truman to concentrate on his family issues and economy in an attempt to divert him temporarily from the truth. Everything is simulated in Truman's world by Christof. In the film, Truman tries to find the truth, but the truth there is not the absolute truth, but just another perspective of life that is happening outside the studio.

Ultimately the defining scene in Truman's existence is the moment in which he sails to the edge of his known universe, so close that he can literally touch it. This is when Truman learns the reality of his situation, and he is exposed to an entirely new truth, breaking free of the previous hyperreality.

Media

Moreover, not only is the theory of hyperrealism applied to Truman but is also applied to those watching the Truman show. They too, are subjected to the illusion and blend of reality and fiction.

In films dealing with the Hyperreality theme, there is a term in the literary register called 'willing suspension of disbelief'. When we watch a film, we know that it is a story that has been written by a writer or writers and that the people who are appearing on the screen are mere actors who have been paid to enact their respective roles in the film. But we willingly suspend that truth from our consciousness. We do that deliberately. Those watching 'The Truman Show' within the film need not take offers to suspend disbelief. The viewers go to the extent of believing that whatever unfolds in the 'The Truman Show' must be real.

Much like the society we live in, Truman's world is dominated by the power of media. Whatever happens in his world reaches every nook and cranny through media. The media can create any news which is not true. This further adds to blurring the line between reality and fiction. Corporate manipulates customers through the medium of media convincing them to buy their products, similar to ads we receive in our media. In this postmodern age, much like ours, finding the truth is too difficult for people and therefore people place truth in the hands of media; whatever they try to circulate will be spread and will be believed. Truth is no longer seen as a constant but rather a tool used by corporations to earn money.

Truman's life is broadcasted 24 hour-a-day. The director Christof makes the 24/7 show because each and everyone who watches that show should feel to live the life of Truman. Like in the

films these days in media, through movies, reality shows, etc. the audience is manipulated.

Especially, media in the name of reality shows, which is created and scripted by the creator to make the audience believe everything is real.

The main goal of every single actor on the set is to keep up the charade and prevent Truman from finding out the truth, and every person who watches the show is buying into the mentality that it is okay to allow this to happen. The mindset that prioritizes entertainment over morality is just the kind of attitude that the show’s producers and advertisers want, and signifies the disturbing hold that these forces have over the average person. Viewers have suppressed their natural beliefs in order to allow themselves to enjoy the show, and thereby demonstrate their own vulnerability.