



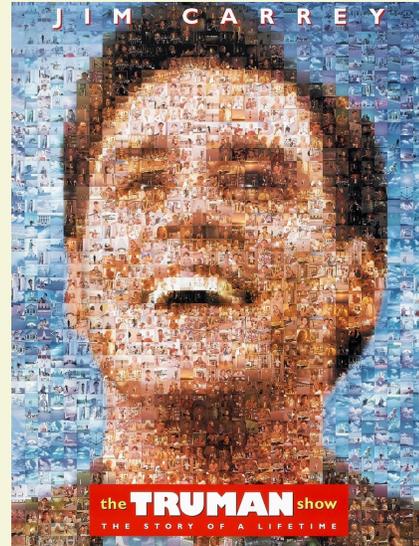
1



2

## Overview

- Truman Burbank is the unsuspecting star of *The Truman Show*.
- The show is a reality television program broadcast live around the clock worldwide.
- Truman has spent his entire life on the seaside town of Seahaven Island. In reality, Seahaven is an enormous set near Hollywood.



3

## Overview

- The set is equipped with state-of-the-art technology to simulate day and night and weather conditions. Five thousand hidden cameras are watching him!
- Truman is discouraged from leaving Seahaven by instilling him with aquaphobia through the "death" of his TV father in a boating accident.
- Producers also broadcast and printed messages about the dangers of traveling.



4

## *Overview*

- All of Seahaven's residents are actors, including his wife, Meryl, his best friend, Marlon, his mother, and others.
- Christof, the show's creator and executive producer, seeks to capture Truman's real emotion and human behavior. He wants to give audiences a relatable everyman.



5



6

## Overview

- Despite Christof's control, he cannot predict all of Truman's actions.
- For example, during his college years, Truman was intended to fall in love with and marry fellow student Meryl.
- Instead, Truman fell for Sylvia, an extra. Sylvia warned Truman that his reality is fake before having to move to **Fiji** with her father.



7

## Overview

- While Truman went on to marry Meryl, he continues to think about Sylvia. For example, he scraps together pieces from magazines to recreate her face in secret. Truman wants to travel to Fiji to see her.
- Outside of the show, Sylvia has become part of a "Free Truman" campaign that demands the end of the show and Truman's freedom.



8

## Overview

- As Truman approaches his 30<sup>th</sup> birthday, a series of production glitches reveal the artificiality of his world.
- **Falling Equipment:** A stage light labeled "Sirius" falls from the "sky" onto his street.
- **Radio Glitch:** His car radio briefly picks up a frequency where actors are describing his exact movements.



9

## Overview

- **The "Dead" Father:** He spots a homeless man who looks exactly like his father, who supposedly drowned years earlier in a storm staged by Christof to instill a paralyzing fear of water in Truman.
- **The Lost Love:** Truman remains haunted by Sylvia (known to him as Lauren), an extra who once tried to tell him the truth before being forcibly removed from the show.



10

## *Overview*

- As the movie progresses, Truman becomes more suspicious about his wife and attempts to escape. He wants to go to Fiji.
- Despite Christof's attempts to stop him—including staged traffic jams and a manufactured nuclear scare—Truman eventually conquers his fear of water.
- He escapes the cameras by pretending to sleep and sets sail on a small boat.



11

## *Overview*

- In a final attempt to retain control, Christof unleashes a violent artificial storm that nearly drowns Truman.
- When Truman refuses to turn back, Christof relents, and Truman eventually reaches the edge of the dome, where his boat pierces the painted "sky."



12

## *Overview*

- At the dome's exit door, Christof speaks to Truman directly for the first time, urging him to stay in the safety of Seahaven rather than face the cruel reality of the real world.
- Truman responds with his iconic catchphrase, "In case I don't see ya, good afternoon, good evening, and good night," takes a bow, and steps out into reality. Christof ends the program and viewers see what else is on television.



13

## *Setting*

- **Seahaven:** The city where Truman lives is the illusion of a man-made perfection.
- Seahaven is the visual embodiment of the all-American dream of a perfect small town.
- Christof states that the town is "the way the world should be."



14

## *Setting*

- The actual town used in the film was Seaside, a 90-acre planned community in Northwest Florida, founded in 1980.
- The residents of the community all conform to a specific building code to create the 'storybook' cottages they live in, and each of Seaside's streets leads to the ocean.
- It has a Disneyland-style prettiness.



15

## *Setting*

- In the Truman Show, Seahaven is a symbol of artificiality and confinement.
- It represents the constructed reality that Truman lives in, which is controlled and manipulated by the show's creators.
- The irony is that while Seahaven implies safe harbor, it is actually a prison for Truman. The surrounding ocean acts like a psychological barrier.



16

## *Setting*

- Seahaven was crafted to look like something out of a bright exaggerated television commercial.
- Director Peter Weir said that “in this world, everything was for sale through heavily lit interior scenes and unnaturally perfect set colors.
- Every frame felt like a product ready to be sold. Seahaven is suburban satire.



- Seahaven symbolizes a fabricated, consumeristic utopia and a modern, surveillance-based prison.

17

## *Setting*

- Some have seen Seahaven as a kind of “Garden of Eden.” It is a simulated perfect world, a “paradise” free from real suffering, but also of genuine free will and truth.
- In this utopian, sin-free, and manufactured world, there is no tree of the knowledge of good and evil and therefore, no authentic freedom and genuine love.



18

## Setting

- **Moon:** Serves as a central, artificial, and symbolic structure representing absolute control, surveillance, and the false reality created by Christof.
- The moon functions as a disguised, high-tech studio base from which Truman is constantly watched, highlighting themes of Truman's lack of freedom, and the artificial nature of his life.



19

## Setting

- **Stripes:** Stripes are ubiquitous in Seahaven. Truman wears stripes in shirts, ties, and pajamas, symbolizing his status as a prisoner of the show's creator, Christof.
- Stripes are also seen on beach umbrellas, the Venetian blinds in his home, and on the poster in Sylvia's room showing Truman behind bars.



20

## *Setting*

- **Unfinished Bridge:** Serves as a powerful symbol of the artificial containment and the limitation of Truman's perceived world.
- The first time Truman and Marlon are on the bridge, they are facing Seahaven while hitting golf balls. The second time they are facing the ocean where Truman says he wants to go to Fiji. The third time their feet are hanging off the bridge. Truman is on the edge facing the water, the one thing that is stopping him from leaving Seahaven.



21



22

## Setting

- **Fiji:** Represents freedom, uncharted adventure, and the hope of being reunited with Sylvia.
- It is the “furthest possible place” from Seahaven, symbolizing that it is the antithesis of the stifling, surveilled, and artificial nature of Seahaven.
- Fiji embodies the deeper desires (aspirations) of our heart for the infinite beauty, goodness, truth, and love.



23

## Setting

- **Boat:** Truman’s boat, named the *Santa Maria*, symbolizes Truman’s courage, journey to liberation, and transition from a manufactured reality to the “New World” of freedom.
- The number 139, or Psalm 139, speaks about being guided and protected even when exploring the depths of the sea, highlighting his spiritual liberation.



24

## *Characters*

- **Truman:** The "True Man" (True-man) – the only authentic, unscripted human existence surrounded by artificiality.
- **Burbank:** Refers to Burbank, California – a major hub for film and television production – rooting his identity in the very industry that imprisons him.
- Truman represents the "Everyman," embodying a fundamental desire for truth, freedom, and authentic love over the comfortable, consumer-driven, and surveillance-heavy confinement of modern society.



25

## *Characters*

- Some have seen Truman as an Adam figure. He represents Adam in a "Garden of Eden."
- Truman's departure is a literal and metaphorical "fall" from innocence into the messy complexity of reality.
- During the climax of escape, he experiences a symbolic baptism, nearly drowns, and walks on water before "ascending" to the door at the top of the set.



26

## Characters

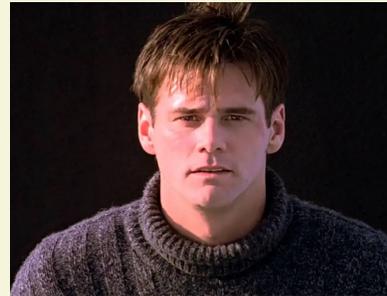
- Some have also seen Truman as a Christ-figure given the following:
- Walks on water when he leaves his boat;
- The name of his boat is *Santa Maria* – the mother of Christ;
- His exit from the set is akin to the Ascension.



27

## Characters

- He is shown on at least three occasions in a crucifix pose:
- When he stops traffic.
- When he lies with outstretched arms after the storm as though he has drowned.
- The ropes around him form the sign of the cross on his chest.



28

## *Characters*

- **Christof:** The antagonist, creator, and executive producer of the The Truman Show.
- He exhibits a god-like, manipulative, and possessive control, viewing himself as a paternal protector who provides Truman with a better, safer life than the harsh reality.



29

## *Characters*

- As the architect of Seahaven, Christof believes his creation is superior to the outside world, justifying his surveillance as protective love. He is driven by the artistic and commercial success of his 30-year "masterpiece."
- Christof holds total control over Truman's environment, including the weather, time, relationships, acting as a puppet master or a "false god." He watches Truman from a control room located in the "moon" on the set.



30



31

## *Characters*

- Christof is portrayed as a deeply complex figure with a “twisted, controlling” form of care for his star. He treats Truman both as a beloved son and a product.
- In the climax, Christof tries to convince Truman to stay by arguing that the outside world is filled with the same lies and deceit as Seahaven
- Christof represents a critique of media consumption, surveillance, and corporate control over individual lives.



32

## Characters

- Some have recognized that Christof's name is a play on "Christ-of"). Unlike Christ who respects free will, Christof uses fear and manipulation to keep Truman in Seahaven.
- He claims to love Truman, yet demands total obedience. Whereas he is omniscient, watching Truman with 5,000 cameras 24/7, and omnipotent (all powerful) over Seahaven, he acts as an Antichrist figure who offers a counterfeit "paradise" devoid of human freedom and authentic love.



33

## Characters

- The atheist and agnostic argue that God (if he exists) should be like *Christof*. An all-knowing (omniscient), all-powerful (omnipotent), and all-good (omnibenevolent) God would stop all suffering and all evil.
- Hence, they want a "Christof" God, and a world like Seahaven. If we are truly honest, we may secretly want a Seahaven, too.
- **Key:** To have a "Seahaven paradise," we need to eliminate **human freedom** and therefore, genuine **human love**.



34

## Characters

- **Meryl Burbank:** Symbolizes the artificial, consumerist, and manipulative nature of modern media.
- Her name is a direct reference to "Meryl Streep," symbolizing an actress who is always acting.
- As a contracted actress, she represents the antithesis of Truman's authenticity, prioritizing product placement, scripted lines, and corporate interests over genuine human connection.



35

## Characters

- **Key:** Meryl represents the "false Eve" She represents a "false Eve" or the temptation of worldly, comfortable, but false, comforts and consumerism, working to keep Truman trapped in the illusion.
- **Note:** Meryl begins the film dressed in white, but as the movie goes on, she has red sprinkled in her clothing (or a red purse) as Sylvia wore red. The red connects Truman with Sylvia, the woman whom he truly loves.



36

## Characters

- **Marlon:** Truman's "best friend" but is an actor like everyone else in the show. He symbolizes the ultimate betrayal of friendship within a corporate-controlled, artificial reality.
- He represents false intimacy, complicity, and manipulation used to keep Truman caged.
- Marlon's consistent, unnatural holding of "Penn Paverly Beer" with the logo facing the camera highlights that in Seahaven, friendship is commodified and sold to the audience.



37

## Characters

- Allegorically, Marlon represents the forces that encourage one to stay in a "blissful" state of ignorance rather than seeking the truth.
- Some have seen Marlon as a Judas-figure or a symbol of the ultimate betrayal of trust within the film's broader Judeo-Christian allegory.
- He says to Truman, "The last thing I'd ever do is lie to you." In reality, Christof feeds him this line making Marlon a "false prophet."



38

## *Characters*

- **Sylvia**: The only truly compassionate, honest, and "real" person in *The Truman Show*.
- She acts as a pivotal, sympathetic figure who risks her career to expose the show's fabricated nature to Truman.
- Sylvia symbolizes truth, genuine love, and the "real world" outside Truman's fabricated reality.



39

40

## *Characters*

- Some have seen Sylvia as a symbol of divine truth (God's Word) that breaks through deception.
- She acts as an "Angel," who advocates for Truman, leading him to challenge his "paradise" and pursue reality, guiding him toward his final "salvation" or liberation.
- Ultimately, Sylvia symbolizes the Catholic concept of truth setting one free, pushing Truman toward an "exodus" from his artificial, controlled reality.



41

## *Catholic Symbolism*

- The **color red** functions as a potent, recurrent symbol representing truth, genuine emotion, and the outside world.
- It acts as a "beacon" that breaks through the artificial, pastel-colored, and, at times, drab, controlled environment of Seahaven.
- **Key:** It symbolizes Truman's longing for authentic human connection, particularly through the character of Sylvia.



42

### *Catholic Symbolism*

- In almost every scene, Truman is wearing some form of red. Most of the characters wear drab colors.
- Meryl isn't wearing red when Truman meets her. Later, Meryl wears red stripes as Truman hasn't fully accepted her in his life. Sylvia wears a red skirt and blouse when Truman meets her.
- Truman wears red shoes when he finally gets the courage to get on a boat and sail away. Sylvia wears red as she goes to meet him.



- The color red is akin to a sacramental in the movie. It is a sign reminding viewers that Truman seeks the truth and authentic love.

43

### *Catholic Symbolism*

- At the beginning of the movie, a studio light labeled "Sirius" (brightest star in the night sky) falls from the "sky."
- This has been interpreted as a **fallen angel** (Lucifer – God's brightest angel) entering the garden (Seahaven), sparking Truman's awakening and eventual "fall" from his false paradise (Christof's "Garden of Eden") into the real world (fallen broken world).



- Truman's "eyes" began to be opened, recalling Adam and Eve's eyes that were opened (Gn. 3:7) after their rebellion and fall from God's grace.

44

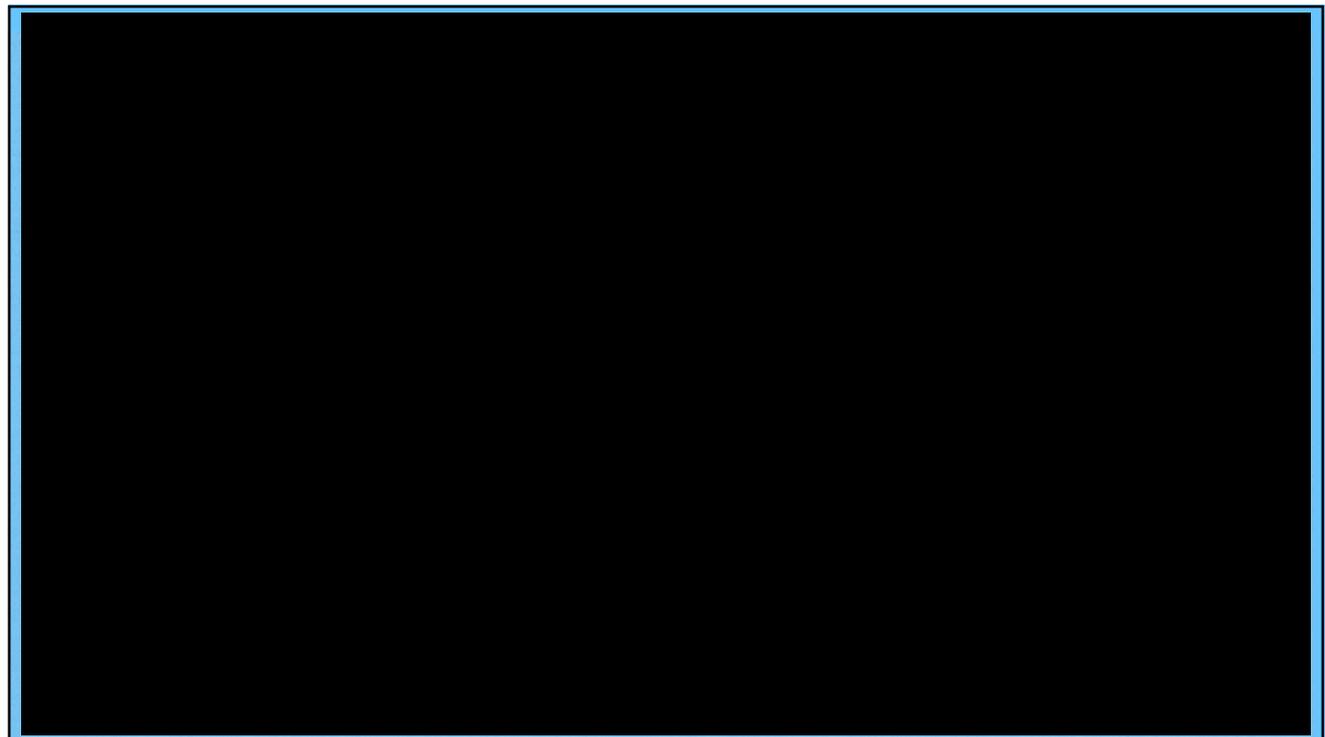
### *Catholic Symbolism*

- In *The Truman Show*, there are **circling movements**. For example, Truman points out to Meryl that a woman on a red bike, a lady with flowers, and a dented Volkswagen Beetle go round and round the block.
- Truman drives round and round the roundabout yelling and laughing with Meryl in the car.



- Circling movements tie in with the enclosed circle of Truman's world.

45



46

### *Catholic Symbolism*

- As Truman sails at the end of the movie, the sail number on his boat, "139," directly references Psalm 139.
- While Christof acts as a false, manipulative god in the dome, the Psalm contrasts this by describing a loving, all-knowing God who truly knows, hems in, and protects Truman.
- **Psalm 139:1-3**: "O LORD, you have searched me and you know me... you are familiar with all my ways."



- The film highlights the difference between the artificial and controlling Christof with the genuine, all-knowing God of Psalm 139.

47

### *Catholic Symbolism*

- The water presents a barrier to truth but also a **means of baptism**, with Truman's survival of the storm as a rebirth.
- His survival symbolizes a transition from death (the death of his old, ignorant self) to life (a new, knowing self).
- His journey on the *Santa Maria*, a nod to the Blessed Virgin Mary who has already traveled to a new world.

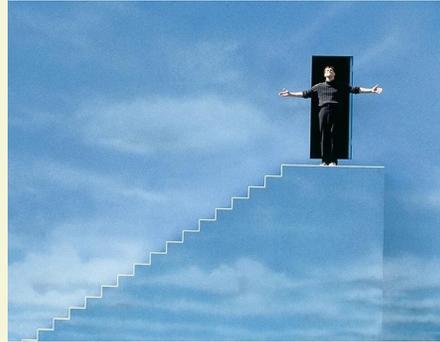


In Baptism, we are immersed in Christ's death and Resurrection, "dying to self" to be born into a new life of grace.

48

### *Catholic Symbolism*

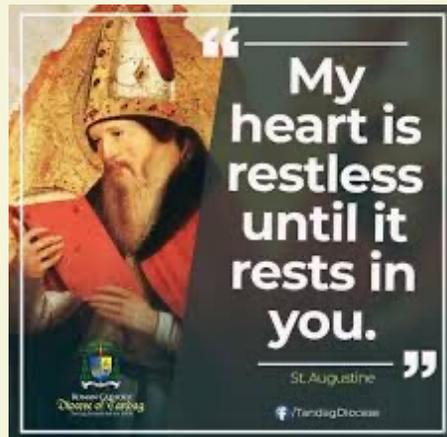
- Truman holds his arms in the **shape of the cross** when he escapes the artificial world of Seahaven.
- Truman sacrifices his comfort to find truth. He has "crucified" his old, controlled life, enabling his resurrection into a new life of free will. As Truman "ascends" up the steps to the real world, so Christ ascends into Heaven or eternal life, the "ultimate reality" with God.



49

### *Catholic Symbolism*

- Truman's journey is not just an escape from a TV show, but a soul's quest to find the **Ultimate Truth** (Sylvia, whose name comes from the Latin for "forest" or "wild," representing the real, unmanicured world).
- Truman ("True Man") serves as an allegory for the Catholic pursuit of ultimate truth and freedom over comfortable, manufactured reality.



50

### *St. Therese*

**"The world is thy ship, not thy home."**

- Seahaven is Truman's ship: safe, polished, temporary.
- His true home lies beyond the painted sky.
- Thérèse reminds us not to confuse comfort with destiny.



51

### *St. Therese*

- Truman's journey unfolds through small awakenings, small refusals, and small acts of courage – the very heart of St. Thérèse's Little Way.
- Holiness is not grand gestures but simple fidelity to the truth.
- Thérèse teaches us that are created for something deeper than a safe and comfortable world. Instead, when we trust God enough to step into the unknown, we discover who we truly are in Christ.



52