

# Big Brother is watching you

by *David ROUSSE*

The core of *The Truman Show* highlights a common Hitchcock theme : an innocent ordinary man who realizes things are not as they seem to be. In the case in point, Truman Burbank (the lead character of the movie) lives in Seahaven, “a nice place to live”. He has a job in insurance, a lovely wife and a loyal best friend. At first glance, Truman seems to be living the American Dream.

The fundamental question is whether the world created by Christof (the show’s creator) is a dream world or a prison. As far as I am concerned, it is abundantly clear that Truman lives in a prison he cannot see, a prison for his mind. The unreal life in Seahaven is pulled over Truman’s eyes to blind him from the truth. What truth ? That Truman is a slave. He is the star of the most popular show in the history of TV but he cannot escape from the studio : he does not have the choice, that is the main issue. Echoing the movie *Pleasantville*, Seahaven seems to be the American society of the 50’s : a plastic paradise where everything is too perfect. It sounds like an unfeeling world. My personal point of view on the topic is that Truman can not be happy because he is not free.

Moreover, the entire life of Truman is thoroughly exploited by Christof. Everything that happens to Truman is controlled. There is no denying that the world of Truman looks like the totalitarian society run by Big Brother (*1984* by Georges Orwell) which censors everyone’s behaviour. As in the novel, humanity is tantamount to love : Truman’s desire to break free comes from the love of his life, Sylvia. On behalf of love, Truman will break his chains and achieve his desire to explore the world.

What conclusion can we draw from that ? It is plain that *The Truman Show* is a satire of media manipulation. It lays emphasis on our TV-obsessed society. Why are there Truman addicts ? Maybe because people have nothing better to do. Besides, we must be aware of the difference between a TV-generated dream world and the real world. For my part, I strongly believe that the only way to be happy is to choose one’s own life.