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# Cue the Sun: An Analysis of Perceptual Effects Representations in "The Truman Show"

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CUE THE SUN: AN ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTUAL EFFECTS REPRESENTATIONS  
IN *THE TRUMAN SHOW*

by

Jason Barr

B.A., Southern Illinois University, 2009

A Research Report  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Master of Science Degree

Department of Mass Communication and Media Arts  
In the Graduate School  
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RESEARCH REPORT APPROVAL

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH REPORT OF

JASON BARR, for the Master of Science degree in MASS COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA ARTS, presented on FRIDAY, APRIL 8<sup>TH</sup> 2011, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: CUE THE SUN: AN ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTUAL EFFECTS REPRESENTATIONS IN *THE TRUMAN SHOW*

MAJOR PROFESSORS: Dr. Novotny Lawrence  
Jay Needham, M.F.A.

Since its release in 1998, director Peter Weir's *The Truman Show* has been the focus of numerous studies. In this report, the film is uniquely placed within a perceptual media effects framework (predominantly citing Davison 1983, Neuwirth and Frederick 2002, and Leone, Peek, and Bissell 2006) so as to identify first, second, and third-person effects representations within its text. Consisting of both a written textual analysis as well as an audio supplement, the report identifies three subjects within *The Truman Show*: Truman, participants of the film's reality show, and said program's viewing audience.

Ultimately, the report's written component provides scenic evidence arguing that Truman is representative of second-person effects traits, the reality show's participants display varied second and third-person traits, and the program's viewing audience represents second-person effects. Lyrically, the audio supplement is primarily told from Truman's perspective and is meant to be a reflexive piece that documents Truman's transition from a second-person to a first-person effect representative.

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## INTRODUCTION

Since its release in 1998, Peter Weir's *The Truman Show* has been studied from a variety of perspectives, which include those who read the film as a "metatextual commentary on neotraditionalism, nostalgia, and planned (or enforced) community" (Beuka 2004, 229), to those who contend that it is a psychoanalytical text that compares Truman's own state of mind with the emotional development of adopted children struggling to find their "real identity" (Brearley 2008, 433). When considering both its popularity within the realm of multiple modes of critical analysis as well as its ever-increasing age, one must question whether Truman's though provoking, albeit artificial, world is still a relevant place that offers applications in fields yet untapped. To answer these questions, one could cite film and literature scholars such as Jackson (2010) and Knox (2010) who continue to publish innovative analyses based upon *The Truman Show*. These works serve as evidence that Weir's film remains a fertile source of critical analyses not in spite of the digital age in which mainstream society currently resides, but because the film anticipated such an age would exist in the first place. Actor Noah Emmerich, who plays Louis Coltrane, the actor portraying Truman's lifelong best friend, Marlon, explains the staying power of *The Truman Show*: "It really is a relevant conversation today, in fact, if not more relevant than it was eight years ago. It was definitely ahead of its time" (*The Truman Show*).

Now, thirteen years after its initial release, the purpose of this paper is to continue advancing conversations regarding *The Truman Show*'s by applying the film's textual elements to a field of study it has hitherto been absent from – perceptual media effects research. By integrating the film's interplay of revolving participants with primary

research from the perceptual media effects arena, this paper will identify representations of second and third-person effects within *The Truman Show*. More specifically, the “me,” “you,” and “them” approach to perceptual effects studies (Davison 1983, 3) will be used as an organizational tool to categorize, within the field’s theoretical framework, the three research subjects that comprise the this essay – Truman, the actors and Christof (hereafter referred to as the “participants”) who control, coordinate, and/or contribute to the worldwide broadcast that is his existence, and the television audience watching the broadcast.

## FILM SUMMARY

Released by Paramount Pictures in June of 1998, *The Truman Show* was directed by Australian filmmaker Peter Weir (*Dead Poets Society* (1989), *Master and Commander* (2003)) from a script by New Zealander Andrew Niccol (*Gattaca* (1997)). Citing his “charm and energy” (The Truman Show), Weir cast comedian Jim Carrey, in his first dramatic turn, for the role of Truman. In addition to Carrey, the film also stars veteran dramatic actors such as Ed Harris (Christof), Laura Linney (Meryl/Hannah), and Noah Emmerich (Marlon/Louis).

Shot on location in the planned community of Seaside, Florida, *The Truman Show* centers on its namesake, Truman Burbank, a thirty-something insurance salesman who is a lifelong resident of the postcard-worthy seaside community of Seahaven. Truman lives at home with his wife Meryl (Linney), enjoys six-packs of brews with his best friend Marlon (Emmerich), and dreads visits from his mother (Holland Taylor) who is pressuring him to give her a grandchild. His prototypical suburban lifestyle established (every house in Seahaven boasts a white picket fence), we begin to see shades of Truman’s discontent in the form of a magazine mosaic dedicated to replicating the likeness of Lauren/Sylvia (Natasha McElhone), his adolescent crush and his proverbial “one that got away.” In addition to his concealed tribute (ironically, Truman hides his work behind a framed picture of Meryl), a combination of blatant product integrations (i.e. the Chef’s Pal all-in-one and the Elk’s Rotary Mower) and obscure camera angles placed in areas such as Truman’s bathroom-vanity and his car radio, gradually reveals that Truman’s life, unbeknownst to him, is being broadcast to a global audience.

Over the course of the film, Truman becomes increasingly suspicious that his ever

perfect, albeit bland and unfulfilling, existence is somehow awry and resolves to leave his seaside home for the first time in his life. His determination to conquer the forces working to discourage his exodus leads to the film's climax in which the boat that he is using to escape from Seahaven crashes into a hand-painted sky backdrop that literally marks the end of the world he has known (specifically, a constructed dome that is so large that it is visible from outer space). Truman's fears are confirmed when he speaks to the man responsible for his captivity, "The Truman Show" creator, Christof. In a scene ripe with religious overtones, Truman (the creation) defies Christof (the creator) and chooses to exit his own show to discover the outside world.

Following its release, *The Truman Show* garnered both critical and financial success. Ed Harris, Peter Weir, and Andrew Niccol received Academy Award nominations for Best Supporting Actor, Best Director, and Best Original Screenplay, respectively. It also earned Carrey, Harris, and composers Burkhard von Dallwitz and Philip Glass, Golden Globes for their respective contributions (IMDb 2011). Moreover, in his review for *Variety*, Todd McCarthy called the film "a gemlike picture crafted with rare and immaculate precision" (McCarthy 1998). Heaping similar praise upon the film, Roger Ebert cited that *The Truman Show*'s "underlying ideas made the movie more than just entertainment...it brings into focus the new values that technology is forcing on humanity" (Ebert 1998). In addition to garnering favorable reviews, *The Truman Show* also performed well at the box office. Produced on a budget of approximately \$60 million, the film grossed over \$260 million at the worldwide box office (Box Office Mojo 2011).

## ON-SCREEN REPRESENTATIONS: TRUMAN

One of the taglines Paramount used in *The Truman Show*'s promotional campaign was "On the air. Unaware." (IMDb 2011). At the time of its conception, this phrase was undoubtedly aimed at concisely delivering a key plot element from the film to prospective moviegoers. However, this tagline is also a great starting point for describing this essay's conceptual approach to the Truman character. Unlike the research subjects that will follow (the participants and the audience), Truman is more or less unaware of his status as a global television icon until the film's final minutes. As such, it is both speculative (and the interest of this project's audio portion) to consider the perceptual effects of a media interaction that the character himself has no idea he is a part of. Instead, this section will approach the perceptual media effects Truman represents based upon the media exposure he undergoes while living his day-to-day life. Doing this not only draws a fundamental contrast between the media interactions of Truman and the essay's other subjects, but it also opens up the possibility of drawing parallels between these varying interactions.

Throughout the course of the film, there are a number of media platforms that Truman is exposed to. The list includes *The Island Times* newspaper, the fashion magazines from which he assembles his secret tribute to Lauren/Sylvia, a local radio station, television, music, and varying items of propaganda meant to instill fear and dissuade him from ever stepping outside the comforts of Seahaven. While Truman's interactions are quite often fleeting, when placed within a scenic context, they help portray him not only as someone who is aware of the active role media play in shaping *his own* worldview, but also as someone who displays tenets of second-person perceptual

effects in that he subscribes to “instances of joint media influence on self and others” (Neuwirth and Frederick 2002, 117). In the following scenic analysis, this paper more closely examines Truman’s “me and you” approach to perceptual media effects.

Truman’s awareness of media influence is established during what proves to be his only television interaction throughout the film. In the scene, Truman idly flips through a photo album while waiting for what Meryl has referred to as his “favorite show” to come on the couple’s modest box television set. Immediately following an episode of the 1950’s sitcom *I Love Lucy* comes *Show Me the Way to Go Home*, an “adoring, much-loved classic” described by the television host as:

A hymn of praise to small town life, where we learn that you don’t have to leave home to discover what the world’s all about, and that no one is poor who has friends. Full of laughter and love, pain and sadness, but ultimately redemption, we share in the trials and tribulations of the Abbott family (The Truman Show).

As the aforementioned dialogue rings out over his television, the camera is primarily fixed on Truman. Audiences see what began as a smile on Truman’s face dissolve into a look of thoughtful reflection. Suddenly, being reminded of the importance of his home and friends is no longer comforting (his initial smile signifying that such a comfort once existed). Instead, it is a warning sign that his “favorite show” may be embedded in the fabric of the conspiracy he is beginning to believe exists for the purpose of keeping him pacified in Seahaven. As he returns to his photo album, ostensibly in search of evidence supporting the program’s wholesome message, his suspicions of foul play are confirmed when his magnifying glass reveals Meryl crossing her fingers as the couple exchanges their wedding vows. At this point, Truman becomes aware not only of the farcical nature

of his marriage, but also of the key role this particular media interaction has played in masking the charade.

While the previous scene establishes Truman's awareness of the media's influence on him, a later scene provides evidence that he believes a similar influence may exert itself on others as well. Specifically, as Truman gains confidence in his suspicion that there are forces working to keep him in Seahaven, he takes Meryl on a car ride in an attempt to point out these forces to her. After experiencing some exceptionally orchestrated traffic jams, the two pull up to a bridge that leads out of town. An exterior wide shot of Truman's car stalled at the bridge's starting point reveals a sign that reads "You Are Now Leaving Seahaven Island: Are You Sure It's A Good Idea?" Cutting to the inside of the car, we see a visibly fearful Truman through the car's rear-view mirror. He is seemingly unable to continue his experiment because he suffers from hydrophobia, a condition that has plagued him since he was a child after seeing his father drown to death during their father/son boating trip. While it has been revealed previously that this ailment has plagued Truman since childhood, we can reasonably infer (based upon other fear propaganda artifacts which emphasize the danger of traveling throughout the course of the film) that signs such as the one at the edge of the bridge play an active role in perpetuating fears that keep Truman within the confines of Seahaven. As the couple sits looking out at the bridge that lies before them, a distressed and less than supportive Meryl reminds him, "You knew this would happen. You know you can't drive over water. Let's go home where you'll feel safe." Rather than accept defeat, Truman closes his eyes so that he cannot see the water, forces Meryl's hand on the steering wheel, and accelerates.

Given the choice to steer or risk being involved in a potentially fatal accident, Meryl successfully guides the car across the bridge.

From a distance, Truman's actions may be interpreted as simply using Meryl's strength to compensate for his own moment of weakness. However, another possible reading is that Truman uses this event as a means of testing Meryl's own vulnerability to the fear propaganda that play such a prominent role in their lives. After all, every Seahaven citizen is exposed to the items of fear that Truman interacts with on a daily basis (i.e. Seahaven's travel agency features similar artifacts that warn of threatening forces such as street gangs and lightning storms). Therefore, since Truman is uncertain of his status as the "star" of the show at this point in the film, it is reasonable for him to believe that he and Meryl share a similar fear of the world outside Seahaven. With that in mind, their smiles, sighs of relief, and shouts declaring "We're over the bridge!" upon arriving at the other side take on new meaning. From Truman's second-person effect perspective, they now seem less a reaction to surviving the crossing of the bridge and more an excitement derived from spontaneously overcoming a socially constructed, mutual fear of the unknown.

## ON-SCREEN REPRESENTATIONS: PARTICIPANTS

When discussing those who actively contribute to the production of *The Truman Show*'s false reality, there is a large pool of subjects to draw from. Nevertheless, the film itself allows an efficient syphoning of the most salient participants by virtue of the screen time they are allotted, as well as the interactions they have with Truman. For the purposes of this essay, four active participants were analyzed to determine the perceptual media effects they represent: Meryl, Marlon, Christof, and Sylvia (as she has left the show, she will be referred to by her real name).

The beginning of *The Truman Show* features the only time in which Meryl and Marlon verbalize their perspective of the show as their real life counterparts, Hannah and Louis. "For me there is no difference between a private life and a public life," Meryl explains. "'The Truman Show' is a lifestyle. It is a noble life. It is a truly blessed life," she finishes. "It's all true, it's all real. Nothing here is fake. Nothing you see is on this show is fake. It's merely controlled," defends Marlon. Although concise, these lines from two of the program's biggest stars are telling. First, they make it clear that both actors are not only willing participants in the broadcast of Truman's constructed life, but that they are also convinced of the show's ability to "control" reality and connect with a global audience as a result. Notably missing from their endorsement of the program is any sort of indication that the show affects them on a personal level. Based on their own words, viewers are led to believe that the fulfillment they derive from helping to deliver the commodity of comfort that is Truman's life to his millions of adoring fans is the sole effect that the program has on them as individuals. Taking that into account, the

argument can be made that Meryl and Marlon embody traits congruent with the claims of the third-person effect hypothesis which state that, “in its broadest formulation, this hypothesis predicts that people will tend to overestimate the influence that mass communications have on the attitudes and behavior of others...[and] will expect the communication to have a greater effect on others than on themselves” (Davison 1983, 3).

Perhaps the most interesting result of conceptualizing Meryl and Marlon as third-person effect representatives is that it ultimately suggests that they exist in a professional vacuum. As a result, they are immune to the personal consequences of starring in a program that is predicated upon ensuring one man’s existence is an absolute fabrication. We are led to believe (by their on-screen actions) that they are simply actors doing their jobs and that the effect of Truman’s show on their own lives is strictly professional. Interestingly, both Linney and Emmerich describe their respective characters as having been affected profoundly by their roles. Emmerich explains the duality required of the Louis/Marlon role saying, “the notion that you’re with someone all of your life, that you can’t actually share this secret with, must have been very difficult...[he] has to be false perpetually to a person who is authentically, probably his best friend” (The Truman Show). Linney discusses the impact that the show’s popularity has on Hannah’s ego and financial status saying that she envisioned her as having “an enormous amount of money and power...for example, every time she slept with Truman, she’d get a bump in salary” (The Truman Show). From an outside perspective, it is reasonable to think that issues dealing with psychological duality and receiving raises as a result of having intercourse with a man who thinks he is your husband are profound effects that stem from their

participation on the show. And yet, perhaps by virtue of Niccol's script, those issues are absent from the screen.

Unlike Meryl and Marlon, there is scenic evidence that points to Christof and Sylvia's status as representatives of second-person effects. Beginning with Christof, two scenes in particular lend perspective to his perceptual effects traits. First, at the beginning of the film, Christof clearly defines the role that he believes Truman plays in the lives of his loyal fans by claiming "we find many viewers keep him on all night for comfort." Later, in a subtle, yet profound scene, viewers discover that Christof also finds comfort in Truman when he is shown standing at the foot of the enormous television screen that the studio crew uses in the show's production. Specifically, it is the middle of the night and Christof strokes a sleeping Truman's head before calling it a day. This moment clearly offers a glimpse into Christof's paternal instinct towards Truman. For him, Truman's content nature is validation of his belief that he has "given Truman a chance to lead a normal life," (The Truman Show) and proof that he (and perhaps he alone) knows what is best for him. As such, Christof's comfort is virtually identical to the self-assurance a parent derives not from knowing their child is safe, but from believing their own actions are the reason for that safety. Placed within this context, the scenes described above fully confirm Christof's belief that he, Truman, and society as a whole are better as a result of his program.

In addition to Christof, Sylvia is also representative of second-person effects. Interestingly, the protest materials we see in her home (i.e. the bumper sticker reading "Say No to 'The Truman Show'" and the poster promoting a "Free Truman Rally") could be construed as a sign of third-person effects by Davison who claims "censorship offers

what is perhaps the most interesting field for speculation about the role of third-person effect” (1983, 14). However, when combining her other actions (i.e. her original attempt to tell Truman the truth about his existence and her call to Christof in which she refers to him as a “liar and manipulator”) with the look of absolute desperation that she has while waiting for Truman take his final bow, it becomes clear that she believes that the program has an unhealthy influence on all parties involved (This claim is further supported by the ominous banner that lines her wall asking “First Truman. Who’s Next, Our Children?”). Later, quite aware of the weight his decision holds for her, Weir immediately cuts to a reaction shot of Sylvia following Truman’s last recital of his famous farewell, “In case I don’t see you, good afternoon, good evening, and good night.” The look of desperation she held previously has been replaced with a smile of relief that signifies her belief that society as a whole will benefit from Truman’s exodus.

Interestingly, the same scene that confirms Christof and Sylvia’s positions as representatives of second-person effects simultaneously establishes their opposing ideologies. Just before Truman takes his final bow, Christof assures him that “in my world, you have nothing to fear.” This is an extremely ironic statement considering the aforementioned fear propaganda that surrounds Truman in Seahaven, but nevertheless, it confirms his sincere belief that Truman (much like his viewers and Christof himself) is also a beneficiary of the artificial world he has created. When taking all of this into consideration, it is not surprising that a crushed look spreads across Christof’s face (an exact opposite of Sylvia’s relieved smile) as Truman recites his famous line for the final time. At this moment, both Christof and Sylvia’s ideological opposition as well as their shared second-person effect traits are confirmed.

## ON-SCREEN REPRESENTATIONS: AUDIENCE

The television audience for Truman's scripted life also provides a potentially large sample size. As the introduction to the fictional show's title sequence exclaims, "1.7 million were there for his birth. 220 countries tuned in for his first step" (The Truman Show). Within such a large global audience, one might expect to find a wide range of attitudes and questions of morality regarding a show whose star is the "first child to have been legally adopted by a corporation" (The Truman Show). Although Davison's initial hypothesis largely overlooked its potential presence, later perceptual effects studies insist on acknowledging audience diversity. For example, both Neuwirth and Frederick (2002, 125) and Leone, Peek, and Bissel (2006, 258) make clear the importance of avoiding simply labeling "them" (that is, the third-person) as a homogeneous other, and instead advocate taking into account specific demographic criteria such as race, neighborhood of residence, gender, and age when discussing media influence of particular groups. In spite of this, Sylvia is the one and only dissenting voice visibly present within *The Truman Show*. The other audience members depicted in the film (although varying in demographic categories such as age, gender, and ethnicity) are in unison when it comes to their irrevocable devotion to Truman. Hight explains the film's use of the homogeneous other while drawing attention to the captive nature shared by Truman and his audience:

The subtext to *The Truman Show* is the suggestion that it is really the program's viewers who are captives of the show...the film presents viewers who seem unable to discern the difference between television and reality, who have an insatiable hunger for an obviously constructed 'reality,' but who nevertheless have a short attention span...Outside the barely glimpsed 'Free Truman' segment of the audience, viewers are shown never to have considered the possibility that

they are implicated in keeping a man a prisoner for his entire life purely for their own amusement (2004, 245).

Based on the theoretical framework provided by perceptual effects studies, and the previous effects identification already completed in this essay, it becomes clear that the audience of Truman's show represents traits consistent with the second-person effects model. Whether it is the elderly female audience members clutching pillows with Truman's face, the middle-aged jailers sporting a Truman mug and calendar set, the Asian family arguing over the exact delivery of Truman's famed farewell phrase, the isolated man watching from the comfort of his perpetual bath, or the diverse group of patrons at the "Truman Bar," they all have two things in common: they love all things Truman-related and they seem blissfully ignorant of the possibility that others (including Truman himself) may be affected differently.

In spite of the fact that the overwhelming majority of audience members are represented as a homogeneous group of devoted fans, there is an interesting deviation that appears once Truman leaves his controlled world. Suddenly, fans who have been depicted throughout the film as being of one pro-Truman accord, react differently to the realization that he will no longer be their ever-present commodity. Set against a fantastical Glass composition that neither fully evokes redemption or disaster (instead hinting at elements of both), the reaction shots that follow Truman's exit from Seahaven show the same elderly females mentioned above in an emotional embrace that expresses their joy at the program's ending. Conversely, we see the bathtub-ridden male from earlier splashing around in ambiguous disgust, either unable or unwilling to cope with the idea that he will no longer be able to partake in the escapist entertainment that was

Truman's life on Seahaven Island. Similarly, the reaction shots at the "Truman Bar" feature an audience that is torn over the program's ending. While some patrons engage in congratulatory high-fives, on the right side of the frame we see a middle-aged African-America male consoling an older white female. Much like the gentleman watching from his bathtub, these two are disappointed that a story they have invested so much time (at this point, a tracker by the television at the "Truman Bar" has counted 10,913 consecutive days of broadcast), money (in his rare television interview from earlier, Christof points out that everything on the show is for sale in the "Truman catalog"), and emotion into is coming to an end.

Although this sudden fragmenting of audience behavior does not occur until the film's final five minutes, it is all the more interesting due to the second-person effect traits they embody for the film's first 90 minutes. From a textual perspective, for *The Truman Show* to go from a mindset that wholly embraces the idea of a homogeneous positivity among audience members to one that is suddenly mindful of individual needs, desires, tastes, and expectations is a leap that suggests an awareness of the absurdity inherent in projecting a uniform set of perceptions on a demographic as varied as Truman's global audience.

## DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The purpose of this essay has been to identify perceptual effects representations in *The Truman Show*. Working from that thesis, an integration of scenic analysis and existing works within the perceptual media effects field has allowed the logical identification of second and third-person effects representations of three primary categories within the film – Truman (identified as representing second-person effects), the show-within-the-show’s actors and creator Christof (a varied finding, with two examples embodying third-person effects and two others second-person), and the program’s television audience (second-person effects).

Although this essay is undoubtedly rooted in the perceptual component of perceived media effects, its implications may be based in the behavioral aspect. As Cohen and Weimann explain, “belief in the power of media messages triggers many behaviors and behavioral intentions” (2008, 383). This perspective can be used to explain aspects of the film such as Truman’s eventual exodus of Seahaven. This is to suggest that Truman’s perception of the influence of his media interactions is the catalyst to his choosing the outside world over his man-made reality. Taking this application one step further, it can also be argued that Truman’s negative perception of media influence is a driving force in his decision to leave because, as he learns that his life is being broadcast to millions, he wishes to revoke his status as a media pawn in order to end the influence he has on his audience. If we subscribe to either of these notions, we can only ponder how Truman might feel upon learning that leaving his set for the world outside is, as Wise puts it, merely choosing one “society of control” over another (2002, 42).

From a commercial perspective, the behavioral component of perceived media effects can also be applied to Truman's television audience. Why else would his show be subsidized by product placements (and feature its own catalog) if not for the fact that the emotional connection his audience has with him motivates them to purchase anything Truman-related (calendars, coffee mugs, etc.) and/or endorsed (cocoa, lawn mowers, etc.)? The direct relationship shared by media products and consumer buying patterns not only highlights one of perceptual media effects most pertinent applications, but also explains why this essay refers to Truman as a commodity on several occasions. As Bell points out, "celebrities connect their respective fan groups to other commodities which those fans are encouraged to buy out of symbiotic attachment to their chosen celebrity" (2010, 173). Moreover, McGregor makes the connection to Truman's own commercial prowess writing, "...Truman is just a commodity – the epitome of a commodity that has become image or spectacle" (2003, 113).

Discussing the implications of this essay's findings with regards to its behavioral impact on consumers provides a convenient segue into suggested future research applications of *The Truman Show*. Given its portrayal of the television industry, specifically of a wildly popular program within the reality genre, I believe that surveying the film with regard to the ideas discussed by Ross in her analysis of cult television fandom and the age of Internet "tele-participation" could be an interesting way of approaching the film from a new media approach (2008, 12). For instance, based upon particular attitudes and behaviors generally associated with cult television fandom, how might Truman's audience have interacted with the show by using instant feedback tools such as texting and/or social media? Of course, this is a broad stroke for the proposed

research. Nevertheless, it is an avenue that could yield new ways of conceptualizing not only the film itself, but also new media's role in creating and sustaining the type of reality stars that, at the time of *The Truman Show*'s release in 1998, seemed to have more in common with science-fiction than "reality."

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

## “Good Morning” Lyrics

This is the story of the life I used to lead  
And how it turned into what haunted me the most  
When you're a ghost in your own life  
You start to fade and you don't mind

I found the crowd to be the most convenient place  
To be alone and count the breaths you took from me  
Now every memory of you  
Is the standard I hold the world to

And at the center of it all  
I hear you telling me  
I've gotta find some room to grow  
And if I never leave  
Then I'll never know

Know how to...

Find my own way back  
The script is dated and the dialogue it lacks  
The scene where I remember  
Home's the one place I don't belong

Where do you turn to

## APPENDIX B

## “In Case I Don’t See You” Lyrics

Welcome back  
If you’re just tuning in  
You’ve missed longing and heartbreak  
The folly of man brought to life  
You’ll be glued to the screen  
By this hopeful idea  
That life’s what we say it will be

In case I don’t see you again  
I’ll be living my life  
Trapped inside a fantasy  
I may never live to see come true

Am I worth the...

Wait and see  
Everybody plays a part  
And we never break character  
Wait for me  
As history repeats itself  
I’ll be dying to see you again

What is life  
If the camera’s off  
And nobody’s watching  
Who am I  
If the camera’s off  
And nobody’s watching

## APPENDIX C

## “The Closest Thing” Lyrics

Is this all we amount to  
A series of photographs taken only  
For the sake of an album  
The tangible proof that we're in love or at least  
In love with the idea  
We're in love with the idea  
Of being in love  
So where does that leave me

When you say my name  
Say it like you mean it  
Not the way you lie  
In our picture everyday  
When you said “I do, I do”  
I don't know how you live with yourself

And when you wear my ring  
Wear it like you mean it  
Not the way its weight  
Makes you cross your fingers  
You said “I do, I do”  
I don't know how you live with yourself sometimes

What's worse  
You're the only thing I have  
You're the closest thing to real (her) I'll ever get  
You're the only thing I have  
And you could not care less

And I can't say your name  
And say it like I mean it  
'Cause the way we lie  
In our picture everyday  
Is just a constant reminder  
Of how much I miss her

And I can't wear your ring  
And wear it like I mean it  
'Cause the way its weight  
Makes you cross your finger  
Is a constant reminder  
Of how much I need her

## APPENDIX D

## “Screens” Lyrics

Sometimes our best just isn't good enough

The cycle begins  
And you've got a lot of nerve  
Even getting out of bed  
'Cause you hit the nail right on the head when you said  
Holding on's more than I can handle  
Machines like us just get disassembled  
We're just last year's model to them

Self-respect is overrated  
We don't fill your needs  
We create them  
Sometimes you just  
Have to live a little  
Have to live a little

If that's how it is  
Then what's the point in even getting out of bed  
'Cause you hit the nail right on the head when you said  
Runner-up's more than I can handle  
Second place never gets remembered  
We're just last year's model to them

Slow down  
You're losing the spark  
That makes you what you are but  
No one knows reality like TV  
She told me sometimes  
Things aren't like they seem

## APPENDIX E

## “Easy on the Fog” Lyrics

These eyes have never left this town  
So I guess  
Dreams are all I have  
To remind me  
Life’s not always as predictable as it seems  
Still you say “Things don’t always work out like we plan”  
Should I take solace in the fact that we’re both

Too safe  
And too comfortable  
In safe jobs  
And comfortable homes  
To ever want more

If this town can’t revolve around me  
Then why should it matter if I leave

I swore I’d never let this go  
So I’m still  
Holding on to you  
Years later  
And there’s this part of me that’s still a little kid  
When you said “You just have to know your limitations”  
I think I finally understand what you meant

No I  
Don’t wanna be  
Just another anchored boat  
Dreaming of life on the sea  
I wanna be  
Someone you’ll remember (You will think of now and then)

There is a boy inside this man  
Whose goodbyes are overdue  
He never gave up on you  
No he never stopped believing you’d come back

All I want is  
All I need is  
Just a little space to be the  
Man I always hoped I’d be the  
Kind who’s not afraid to sink or swim

## APPENDIX F

## “This So-Called Life” Lyrics

Good morning great big world  
 I was sad to hear that all your greatest secrets  
 Were found at years ago  
 And now I’m just so lost  
 Upon learning that your maps are set in stone  
 So now I fear that I will never make it out

Of these coordinates  
 That I’ve outgrown  
 That I have grown to hate

Just say the word  
 And I’ll be there  
 Pack my bags and say goodbye  
 Leave this town and don’t think twice  
 ‘Cause I can take the failure  
 But I can’t stand another night  
 Waiting, wishing, wondering  
 Stuck in this so-called life

Good evening great big world  
 I was hoping to play some small part in making  
 Up your history books  
 And now I’m all but sure  
 That your pages are composed by winning hands  
 And I’d be satisfied to lose my hands in hers

In the kind of ending  
 They’d write about  
 The kind you’d see on screen

I live my life with the thought  
 Of us on an island the wind blows threw her hair  
 And we stay forever  
 I have this dream where I talk  
 And you listen as if you cared at all  
 And it made all the difference  
 But I wake up in a world  
 Where you talk to ghosts like I’m not even here  
 I’m so removed  
 So I say “I’m sitting right in front on you”  
 “Who the hell are you talking to”

Is this what I signed up for  
Is this my dream come true  
And it's a stretch but I'm willing  
To bet that there's an island that's just  
Waiting to be discovered  
Just dying to be discovered  
It took some time but I found hope  
In the last place that I looked  
In myself  
I found here there

## APPENDIX G

## “Good Afternoon, Good Evening, and Good Night” Lyrics

I am a ghost of myself  
The boy you left dying for answers (There on the beach)  
He never came home  
And what will you think of me now  
If I walk through the door  
And the cameras aren't on  
Is there life outside

Are you there  
I've been dreaming of you  
The only true breath from  
The air that I knew  
Are you scared  
I've forgotten of you  
Could the ocean forget to  
Depend on the moon  
Is there life outside

All of this time  
I was broken I knew  
I could piece this together  
With paper and glue  
Because all that I wanted  
Was just to be wanted  
By you

So I left everything but this picture of you  
And I've come all this way for the slightest of truths  
Just to find  
Reality's a lie

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