

**Surface Attraction: Hyphological Encounters with the Films of David
Lynch**

**Submitted by Allister Mactaggart
Middlesex University**

In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy

May 2006

Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
1. Introduction: Towards a Palimpsest	1
2. Ever Died? Ever Failed? No Matter. Die Again. Fail Better. Immanence and Transcendence in <i>Twin Peaks</i> (with apologies to Samuel Beckett)	54
3. Reasons To Be Tearful: Snapshots of Lynchian Excess	85
4. Driven to Distraction: Cinema Spectatorship along the Lynchian Highway	111
5. Pierced by the Past: Filmic Trauma; Remembering and Forgetting	142
6. “It is Happening Again”: Experiencing the Lynchian Uncanny	170
7. Conclusion: “A Stitch in Time...”	201
Notes	230
Bibliography	237

Abstract

How does one turn a cinematic passion into an academic thesis? This is the question that runs through my work, which is both a labour of love and a series of love letters. Does one, can one, tell the truth about one's love object? Written in solitude about the darkened passions of the cinema, and the commodified reenactment via DVD and video, it seeks to locate this body of work, organized under the signifier David Lynch, within a broader cultural history of film and art, rather than, as so many chronologically based studies have done, to assess the individual films and then collectively to remark upon the *auteur's* signature. Instead, it seeks to experience again, or anew, the ontological strangeness of film within the saturated market place, and observe how, in this body of work, the normative framework of the North American film industry is disturbed from inside by a practice which explores and critically examines the creative potential of the medium within the constraints of the capitalist mode of production and consumption.

Taking Roland Barthes' neologism of the theory of the text as a *hyphology* as its means of organization, the thesis presents a series of chapters which consider separate concepts or ideas about these films which, although appearing freestanding, come together in the final chapter in this web of engagement with Lynch's cinema and critical theory.

In the final analysis, the work reflects upon a range of approaches to its subject to conclude that the solitary, or seemingly isolated, experience of film is itself socially, culturally and politically important and tells us a great deal about contemporary subjectivity.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Adrian Rifkin for his support and guidance over the period of this project. In particular, I am grateful for the way in which he has made invaluable suggestions about moving the work on which, I hope, has lead to a more interesting final piece than its original framework might have suggested.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the School of Arts, Middlesex University, for providing me with a bursary in the academic year 2003 - 2004. Without this assistance, which allowed me to devote more time to the project and reduce my teaching commitments, I fear that I would have been working on the thesis interminably.

My near neighbour, Jackie Brown, brought her eagle-eyed proofreading skills, as well as her poetic exactitude, to great effect when I could no longer see the “wood for the trees”, or more particularly, the commas for the semi-colons.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to try to record my thanks to Pip Mactaggart for her constant support and encouragement, not only for this thesis but for the entire period of my mature student life which stretches back much further than I care to remember. Whatever words I use will be woefully inadequate to register my heartfelt gratitude for her forbearance and optimism that the work might one day be completed.

Introduction: Towards a Palimpsest

To be a theoretician of the cinema, one should ideally no longer love the cinema and yet still love it: have loved it a lot and only detached oneself from it by taking it up again from the other end, taking it as the target for the very same scopic drive which had made one love it.

Christian Metz (1982, p.15)

And this year I shall have to articulate what serves as the linchpin of everything that has been instituted on the basis of analytic experience: love.

Jacques Lacan (1998, p.39)

You know what a love letter is? It's a bullet...straight from my gun, fucker...Once you get a love letter from me, you're fucked forever...Understand, Fuck?

Frank Booth to Jeffrey Beaumont in *Blue Velvet* (1986)

A Cinematic Love Letter

I want to start with some snapshots of my cinematic reminiscences. But is this personal account of my long-standing interest in the work of David Lynch an improper way to commence? Should not one seek to be objective in academic writing and hide one's personal experiences from the object of study? Should not one search to disentangle the "truth" of the texts under investigation rather than to admit one's subjective investment in the corpus, at the risk of losing one's objectivity? And as Lacan (1998) has told us to speak of love is to risk lapsing into imbecility. But that is the risk I feel I must take as I set out on this task.

As far as I recall I first became aware of David Lynch's work in 1986/7. I do not remember exactly when as I do not keep a diary, and consequently my understanding or recording of time and memory is not archived in any logically structured written format. Consequently, my memories ebb and flow in ways which disturb any logical sense of diachronic understanding, but I will give you the current version. Anyway, it was when *Blue Velvet* came out and I went to see a screening at the Anvil cinema in Sheffield. The Anvil was the precursor and poor cousin of the Showroom, the current state-of-the-art independent

cinema situated in the Cultural Industries Quarter of the city. Prior to the opening of the Showroom the Anvil was the place to see independent and non-mainstream films. It consisted of three small screens situated at ground floor level beneath the Grosvenor House Hotel in the city centre.

I used to enjoy going to this cinema on a Saturday afternoon, for a treat after a heavy week's work in my previous life as a Chartered Surveyor, when it was relatively quiet and one could really enjoy the film in a half-filled auditorium. It always felt such an illicit pleasure being ensconced in the darkened space, knowing that daylight was blocked out while so many people went about shopping, socializing and generally fulfilling the demands of quotidian life outside. On the occasion I first saw *Blue Velvet* I remember that it was a pleasantly warm autumnal day as I drove in to the city centre. In some ways, now that I come to write about it, it feels as if it was recent not nineteen/twenty years ago. I remember being excited, as usual, going in to buy my ticket and taking a seat mid-way back from the screen, my preferred obsessional location. As I recall there were only about twelve other people there, one of whom, a middle-aged man, walked out half way through.

The auditorium was small and comforting and lined with heavy red velvet drapes. They had a thick texture intended to blot out sounds from the other auditoria. This textural quality was then uncannily echoed in the title sequence of the film as the close-up shots of blue velvet softly rustle like animistic tree bark. The only difficulty I had with the venue was the acoustics because even with these drapes one could sometimes hear sounds from the film in the adjoining auditorium, and I seem to recall some annoyance at one stage as strange, muffled, uninvited sounds from another film broke through the party wall to my left-hand side. But again, in retrospect, this seems completely apposite to the experience of watching *Blue Velvet*. Indeed this whole recollection of seeing the film feels most particularly "Lynchian".

At the end of the screening I remember feeling stunned, baffled and yet elated. I remained seated for some time trying to make sense of what I had just seen. Eventually, I put on my coat and walked slowly out of the auditorium. But I did not want to go home or even leave the cinema building straightaway. And I was not the only one. As I milled about near the sales desk I remember that there was a group of three women near by to my right who huddled together in shock to discuss what they had seen. I remember that one of the women, crouching on her haunches, was visibly upset. I seem to recall the tenor of their talk as I (illicitly) listened in like Jeffrey Beaumont, becoming a character from a Lynchian film that had started after the screening had ended, or more probably continued beyond the screening, to see if I could make sense of my experience through their comments. Most of the talk revolved around the “primal scene” of Frank Booth with Dorothy Vallens as Jeffrey watches from the slatted wardrobe doors. I have put “primal scene” in quotation marks because this was not a term that I was aware of at the time and which has only come to make sense for me subsequently in light of my readings around this film.

While the group of women were undeniably shocked by this scene they also appeared to feel that it, and the film generally, offered an insight into the darker recesses of the psyche which, although problematic to them, articulated complexities of sexuality and sexual difference that were not often shown in mainstream cinema. Feeling that I, like Jeffrey, was voyeuristically taking advantage of my situation by watching and listening into their conversation and not knowing if I was becoming “a detective or a pervert”¹, I left the cinema and in a delightfully bewildered state drove home.

Re-reading the paragraphs above I am aware that there is a great deal of retrospective commentary on this scene, my cinematic primal scene, you could say. At the time I do not think I had any detailed comprehension of the complexities of what I had witnessed, but that its effect/affect over me was such that I desperately wanted to watch the film again, which I did the following week. Following that I became more interested in hunting out Lynch’s work.

I remember, shortly afterwards, seeing the poster for *Eraserhead* and being transfixed by the image of Henry Spencer, but it was not until much later that I saw the film. I also recall reading some of the advanced information for *Twin Peaks* which caught my attention. I soon became an avid follower of the both the television series and the resultant “prequel” feature film, *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*. Since that initial introduction to Lynch’s work I have kept a close eye out for his output in its various forms.

I think it is true to say that seeing *Blue Velvet* that afternoon, and wanting to know more or understand something of what I had seen, was one of the reasons for my initial entry into my mature academic life in art history and film. Returning to it now is a pleasure but it is one that is shrouded by anxiety and doubt. After reading through the monographs and essays on Lynch’s work do I have anything new to say? Has not all the interesting work been done already? Do I not risk lapsing into banality and imbecility because I have not, in Metz’s terms, been able to detach myself from the love object and comment from the other side of the scopic drive? Well, time will tell. But to paraphrase Lacan, this body of work is the Lynchpin for my own, cinematic, analytical experience.

In seeking to develop an understanding of critical responses to Lynch’s works I have accumulated, as one would expect for a literature review, a vast amount of materials on the ever expanding writings about his output, which I have sought to arrange into a form of archive appropriate to the task in hand. Therefore, following this initial, confessional preamble, the next stage on this exploratory investigation will involve stepping into my Lynchian archive to see what has been written about this body of work so far, and then to consider ways of working with the archive to configure my methodology for approaching these films and how this relates to, or differs from, existing commentaries.

The Archive as a Dictionary

Dictionary *dik'shan-a-ri, n* a book containing the words of a language alphabetically arranged, with their meanings, etymology, etc; a lexicon; an additional program available in some word-processing packages which will check text for spelling errors against a dictionary contained on the disk (*comput*); a work containing information on any area of knowledge, alphabetically arranged. [LL *dictiōnārium*; see **diction**]

Chambers (1998, p.448)

The dictionary is an ideal way of exploring a language since it has the same structure as a language; it is a synchronic system in which the terms have no positive existence, since they are defined by their mutual differences; it is a closed, self-referential structure in which meaning is nowhere fully present but always delayed in continual metonymy; it defines each term by reference to other terms and thus denies the novice reader any point of entry (and, to refer to a Lacanian formula, there is no point of entry, there can be no sexual relationship).

Evans (1996, p. ix)²

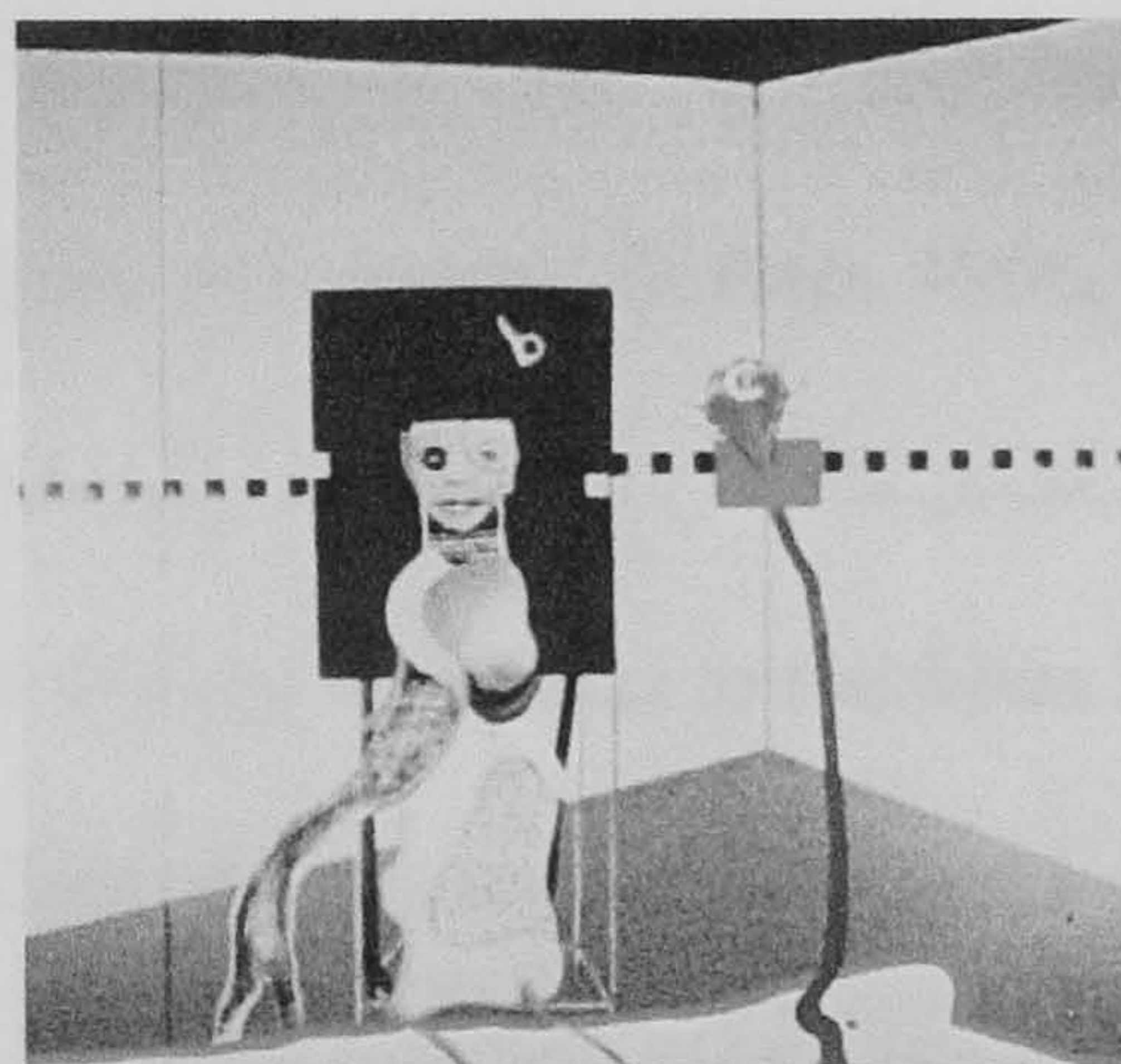


Figure 1. A still from *The Alphabet*, 1968 (Lynch, 1994, p.70)

One of Lynch's early works is a short film entitled *The Alphabet* of 1968 (Figure 1) which concerns a young girl's terror of learning. The notion of the tyranny of language and of learning crops up time and time again in Lynch's interviews and makes the connection between the alphabet, language and the archive a useful place to begin. For as I seek to make some linguistic, visual and acoustic sense of this body of work, perhaps starting from the dissection of the secondary sources which are then re-structured into an alphabetical format, is an appropriate place from which to start to (re)configure the work. But this is to be a partial alphabet, not every letter is covered, leaving space for further insertions at a later date as more is written on the subject. Also, the sense of not completing an alphabet, of not enclosing the

subject and object of my inquiry, appears to be a most suitable means of relating my own position in which I am not seeking a telos but, rather, an unfolding of some sort of topological structure more in keeping with the complexities of the cinematic texts under consideration. Rather than seeking to capture the work, to fix it in some theoretical casement, I hope to open up the complexities, contradictions and paradoxes in these texts. In that way some of the joys, pleasures, and *jouissance* of them may, hopefully, be kept alive and in play. In addition, there is my own sense of wariness of writing about these works as if they may lose some of their hold over me. What is it that I hope to learn from this task by opening up my predominantly silent thoughts to public scrutiny?

A mode of organization of the archive that allows for synchronic insertions without necessarily combining these in any diachronic mode, “in which meaning is nowhere fully present but always delayed in continual metonymy” (Evans, 1996, p.ix), seems to be most appropriate for it provides a non-hierarchical structure to the presentation of items. For instance, I will not discuss all of the critical responses to the films but pick out those which I consider are most relevant or useful for elaboration. In addition, I will be referring to the main texts written on Lynch in English. There is a substantial body of work in other languages, predominately French and German, but my limited ability to read these texts unfortunately precludes me from commenting meaningfully on them.

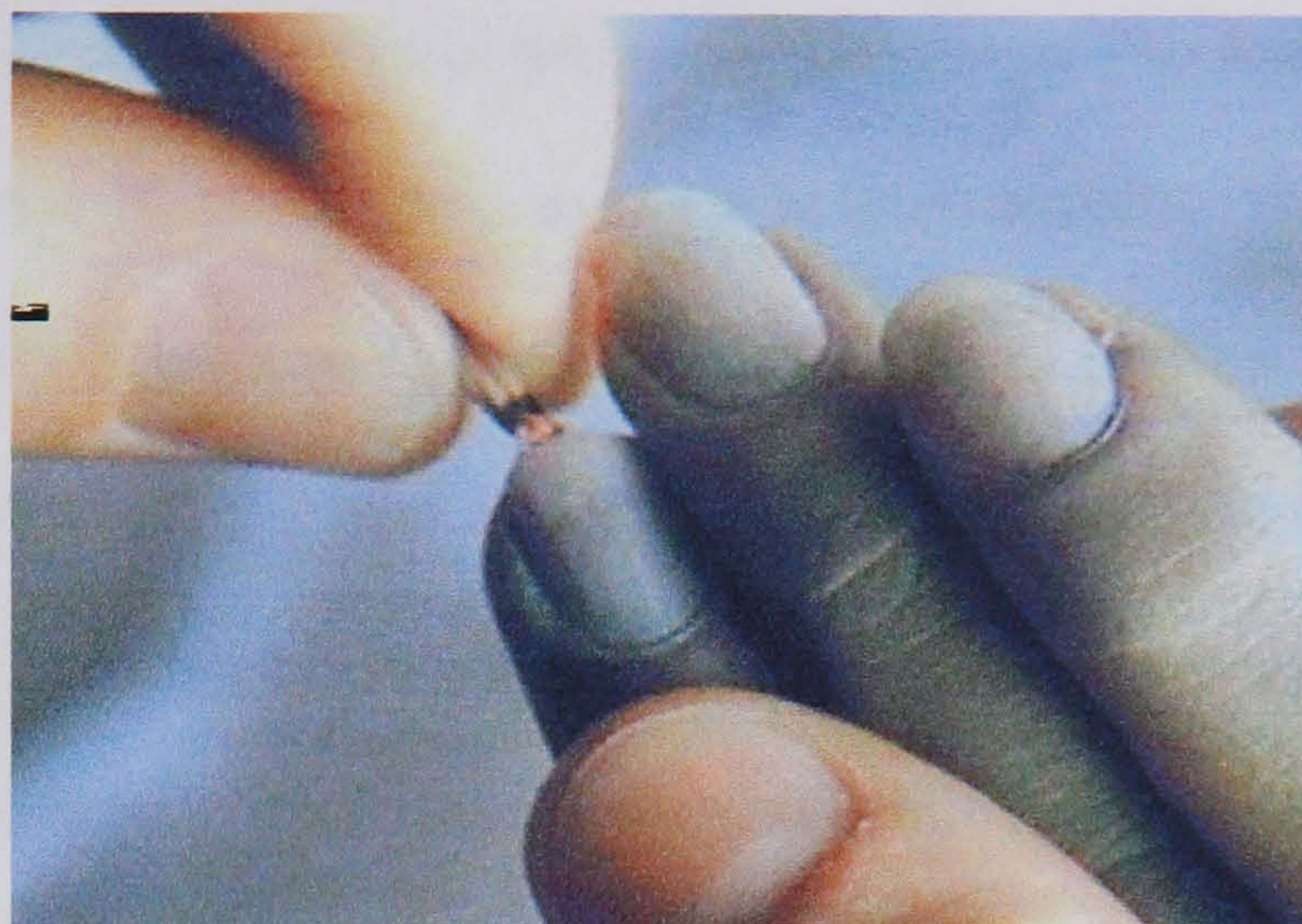


Figure 2. A letter always arrives at its destination? Special Agent Dale Cooper removes the letter “R” from beneath the fingernail of the dead body of Laura Palmer in *Twin Peaks* (pilot), (Twin Peaks Online, 2005).

What I would be able to tell you about my intentions in my films is irrelevant. It's like digging up someone who died over four hundred years ago and asking them to tell you about his book.

David Lynch (Quoted in Chion, 1995, p.121 and elsewhere in similar terms)

The author is therefore the ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning.

Michel Foucault (1984, p.119)

We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single “theological” meaning (the “message” of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture.

Roland Barthes (1977, p.146)

A is (perversely) for... Slavoj Žižek.

Žižek who, despite or in spite of his surname, insistently and hysterically demands to be heard first in this critical archive, due both to his extensive writings on Lynch and his ubiquitous analyses of culture via Lacanian theory. In his work, to date, he has singled out three directors for detailed commentary: Alfred Hitchcock, David Lynch and Krzysztof Kieślowski.

Paraphrasing the subtitle of one of his books we could say that Žižek's emphasis is on the analysis and implications of “The Perverse Core of Lynchicity”. For instance, in his essay

‘The Art of the Ridiculous Sublime: On David Lynch’s *Lost Highway* (2000)’, he is keen to rescue Lynch’s film (and overall work) from two general readings. The first reading he contests is that the film is a cold, postmodern, exercise in intertextuality. The second, directed largely at Martha Nochimson’s book on Lynch (see entry under N for New Age), being that of New Age Obscurantism, in which the work is regarded as attesting to “the flow of subconscious Life Energy that allegedly connects all events and runs through all scenes and persons, turning Lynch into a poet of a Jungian universal spiritualized Libido” (Žižek, 2000, p.3).

For Žižek Lynch’s work is to be treated seriously by being read through the Lacanian Real: that which resists symbolization but which is the hidden underside of our existence and which manifests itself through excessive, disturbing, horrific yet enjoyable acts and uncanny details, in other words, through its “ridiculous sublime”. So unlike Hitchcock whose uncanny is made up of the repressed underside of “reality”, or Kieślowski’s “de-realization of “reality”, Lynch’s films provide “extraneation” whereby “reality” is decomposed in such a way that its fantasy and real elements are displayed horizontally³.

So we are asked to read all of the work seriously, both the excessive violence of the obscene superego fathers: Frank Booth in *Blue Velvet*, Leland Palmer in *Twin Peaks*, Bobby Peru in *Wild at Heart*, and Mr. Eddy in *Lost Highway*; but also the clichéd naiveté of so many scenes, for example, Sandy’s dream of robins in *Blue Velvet*, and the redemptive angels who appear in both *Wild at Heart* and *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*.

In Žižek’s analyses Lynch pushes reality – the minimum of idealization the subject needs in order to sustain the horror of the Real – to the limit in his films. The sublime is provided by the larger than life, hyperactive figures embodying pure enjoyment and excessive evil, such as Frank Booth, Bobby Peru and Mr. Eddy who act as figures of *père- jouissance* (fathers of enjoyment) (Žižek, 2000, p.20). He calls attention to a key phrase in Lynch’s films which always return as an insistent, traumatic, and indecipherable message as the Real making

its appearance in the narrative structure. These phrases act as “a signifying chain, which resonates as a Real that insists and always returns” (Žižek, 2000, p.17). These phrases include: “The sleeper must awaken” (*Dune*), “the owls are not what they seem” (*Twin Peaks*), “Daddy wants to fuck” (*Blue Velvet*), and “Dick Laurent is dead” (*Lost Highway*). To these we can now add “This is the girl” from *Mulholland Drive*. In terms of *Lost Highway*, he argues that the narrative form directly renders the circularity of the psychoanalytic process in that Fred Madison hears the phrase through the intercom at the beginning of the film and speaks it into the intercom at the end, thereby signaling how “The temporal loop that structures *Lost Highway* is thus the very loop of the psychoanalytic treatment, in which, after a long detour, we return to our starting point from another perspective” (Žižek, 2000, p.18).

What then of the films like *The Elephant Man* and *The Straight Story* in which the sentimental appears rather than the obscene superego fathers? In respect of the latter, he writes that:

The very beginning of David Lynch’s *The Straight Story*, the words that introduce the credits, ‘Walt Disney Presents – A David Lynch Film’ provide what is perhaps the best résumé of the ethical paradox that marked the end of the twentieth century: the overlapping of transgression and its norm. Walt Disney, the brand of conservative family values, takes under its umbrella, David Lynch, the author who epitomizes transgression, who brings to light the obscene underworld of perverted sex and violence that lurks underneath the respectable surface of our lives.
(Žižek, 2001b, pp.142-4)

Further, he takes *The Straight Story* as a means of considering the whole of Lynch’s output to argue that:

What, then, if this is the ultimate message of Lynch’s film – that ethics is ‘the most dark and daring of all conspiracies’, that the ethical subject is the one who in fact threatens the existing order, in contrast to a long series of weird Lynchian perverts (Baron Harkonnen in *Dune* (1984), Frank in *Blue Velvet*, Bobby Peru in *Wild at Heart*...) who ultimately sustain it.
(Žižek, 2001b, p.144)

For Žižek (1994, p.114) Lynch's films present postmodern "hyperrealism" whereby "the overproximity to reality brings about the 'loss of reality'; uncanny details stick out and perturb the pacifying effect of the overall picture". And, as such, the work in its presentation of the "ridiculous sublime" is an attempt to unravel the coincidence of opposites in Lynch's "ontology" to expose "the enigma of 'postmodernity' itself" (Žižek, 2000. p.3). Consequently, this body of work has been an important component in Žižek's analysis and critique of postmodernity.

A is also for...*Auteur* (and getting away from the concept).

What constitutes the work of David Lynch? Or should that be "David Lynch"? Is it only the films or does it include the work for television as well? In that case how does one deal with the episodes of *Twin Peaks*, for example, that were not written and directed by Lynch? Do the paintings, drawings, sculptural pieces, photographs, furniture, music and song lyrics, and cartoon strips stand with, against, or separate from the rest of the work? What about the work written in collaboration, such as *Lost Highway*? Or the work originally written by others but subsequently turned into a screenplay and directed by Lynch, such as *Wild at Heart*? What is meant when someone refers to the work of David Lynch? Is there any sense of wholeness to this signifier? What is it about certain works (including ones where the "real" David Lynch is not involved) that are referred to as "Lynchian"? How can I define, from the outset, the object of my inquiry? And how does my Lynch relate to the other Lynch's out there?

I raise these questions as a tentative framework for investigating the archive, for it appears to be a commonplace assumption, in many quarters, that David Lynch is, in one guise or another, an *auteur*. For examples of this approach I would refer you to, *inter alia*:

Alexander (1993); Andrew (1998); Atkinson (1997); Chion (2005 Second Edition; and 1994, whose work has itself been an influence upon Slavoj Žižek's approach to Lynch); and Kaleta (1993). All of these texts, in one form or another, presuppose a homologous relationship

between the individual called Lynch and his work, and most connect the two via a discussion of the Lynchian “subconscious”. This term comes to act as a central methodological framework for linking Lynch as *auteur* and the resultant films. The monographs generally adopt (deliberately or not) a Jungian model in an attempt to relate how Lynch is able to “tap” into his subconscious to produce works displaying an unique personal vision, related, in some way, to the director’s biography. Obviously the writers do not adopt exactly the same approach, but in many cases there is a similar theoretical underpinning to their writings. And, even after taking into account all the valuable and perceptive points these texts make, I find this approach somewhat limiting. The reliance upon the notion of an *auteur* is critically insufficient because it fails to consider the more complex relationship between the work of art and its “readers”. The use of the term “subconscious” allows these writers to make a “common-sense” connection between the meaning of the films and the director. Whereas, for many directors these writers could perhaps seek to argue for direct links between the two, with Lynch there is always the problem of a sliding away of the man from the work due to the lack of narrative cohesion many of these commentators note (and often bemoan) in some of the films. The two never entirely coincide but this is then dealt with by reference to the subconscious, whereby these writers claim, a link can be maintained and, at the same time, this permits them, simultaneously, to disavow their relationship to what they consider to be unpleasant or reactionary about these films. By either willfully or inadvertently misinterpreting psychoanalytic and semiotic theory these writers wish to de-problematize the relationship of the work to those people who interact with the work, namely the spectators, and the socio-economic conditions of production, distribution and exhibition.

Lynch’s work elicits a range of responses ranging from adulatory exclamations for his extreme vision, uncensored by society’s mores, to claims of extreme conservatism which hides, as part of postmodern aesthetics, a most reactionary ideology which is accepted by the largely middle-class audience. It is the range of responses that interests me. In Barthes’ terms

is the author not dead? Or, has “he” returned to haunt us once again via the authorial function in the celebrity fixated constructions of the contemporary cinema industry? Perhaps we can say that the personality of Lynch as *auteur* is used in the New Hollywood as an industry signifier for marketing purposes, but that it seldom reveals and, indeed, limits the possibilities of critical interaction with the work.

For many commentators (for example, Alexander, 1993; Andrew, 1998) Lynch is undoubtedly an *auteur* whose subjective and, as these critics would say, subconscious form of cinema is one where its postmodern style is at odds with its reactionary content. In compiling the archive I kept coming up against this distinction between form and content in Lynch’s films, between the notions of a postmodern style which sits at odds with the conservatism of the content. Throughout, there are inherent difficulties in this approach which is caught up in the restrictions and reductions inherent within *auteur* criticism. This was not an approach that I felt was congenial to this body of work, and it was one from which I wanted to distance myself from the outset. I also felt that it was rather an odd opinion for these writers to adopt where they professed admiration for the style of the work but then sought to distance themselves from what they considered to be the unpalatable content. Yet, this sense of ambivalence also struck me as worthy of investigation and it is one aspect to which I will return throughout this dissertation.

Thinking of a way round this critical impasse between form and content lead me to consider the distinction that Georg Lukács’s (1978) makes between narration and description in relation to the Zola and Balzac debate within nineteenth century literature, and then to apply these insights to Lynch’s work. For Lukács, Zola describes events, such as the horse racing scene in *Nana* for example, from the perspective of an observer, whereas Balzac (and Tolstoy) narrate events from the standpoint of the participants. As such, he points out that in so doing, “We are the audience to events in which the characters take active part. We ourselves experience these events” (Lukács, 1978, p.116). And I think that this becomes increasingly

valid in terms of Lynch's work where the relationship between the characters, the events shown, and the spectator's involvement become progressively more interconnected. And as Lukács (1978, p. 118) goes on to say, "The opposition between experiencing and observing is not accidental. It arises out of divergent basic positions about life and about the major problems of society and not just out of divergent artistic methods of handling content or one specific aspect of content". Taking these ideas on board then helped me to think about how the Lynchian archive might be reconfigured in what I hope is a productive manner (See C for Conservative for more on this).



B is, predominately, for... *Blue Velvet* (1986).

Peter Brunette's and David Willis' (1989) jointly authored *Screen/play: Derrida and Film Theory* provides a reading of *Blue Velvet* on facing pages with that of François Truffaut's *The Bride Wore Black* (1967) as a means of elucidating deconstructive thought. By disguising their individual voices these readings, under the title 'Black and Blue', propose opening up or "multiplying textual effects in the hope of producing an excess that even the most refined and multifarious power machine will not always contain" (Brunette and Willis, 1989, p.149). By problematizing textual borders this essay seeks to raise the question of whether the invocation of black and/or blue between Sandy's first appearance and Dorothy's bruised and battered body is "complicit with the resolution of difference by violence that dominates the film?" (Brunette and Willis, 1989, p.147) Their response is that we need to read the film's "doublings and transversals as the rewriting that remotivates the play of difference that a corrective violence would seek to foreclose, reading blue in black, violet in velvet and velvet *in violet*, and so on" (Brunette and Willis, 1989, p.171). In contrast to the *auteur* approaches this

reading opens up the text in all its polysemic possibilities and is a useful corrective to the reductive critical responses offered elsewhere, and as such it is an approach that I find useful and productive. However, while we need to seek out textural fissures there are, at the same time, textual quilting points (*points de capiton*) that might constrain meanings, which the following essay alerts us to.

Barbara Creed's (1988) 'A Journey through *Blue Velvet*: Film, Fantasy and the Female Spectator' argues that the film emerges "as an *hysterical* text" (Creed 1988, p.97). While the structure of the film suggests that it may all be Jeffrey's dream, at the same time "*Blue Velvet* is a public fantasy about a private dream which involves a representation of primal fantasies" (Creed, 1988, p.100). Furthermore, in relation to the primal scene and Jeffrey's previous sexual initiation by Dorothy, that "the spectator, however, is not completely free to identify with either man or woman or the symbolic positions they occupy...The representation of the seduction fantasy is overdetermined by the theme of castration" (Creed, 1988, p.103). Therefore, while the film openly displays its Freudian knowingness, beneath its surface irony, it is most hysterical because Frank is unable "to accept his 'proper' gender role in relation to the mother, Frank becomes an hysteric" (Creed, 1988, pp.109-110). Overall, however, it is the theme of castration which is overdetermined in *Blue Velvet* and that the female spectator is confronted by this dilemma: "Despite being able to identify with the multiplicity of subject positions, for her the fictional characters of mainstream, male-centred cinema are not 'real beings, possessing life and action' because, in general, they belong to someone else's fantasy" (Creed, 1988, p.116). This, I would suggest, is a very important point, and one that needs to be borne in mind as we work through this dissertation, because it brings us to those points where fantasy, viewing positions and restrictions upon multiplicity and polysemy come together.

Frederic Jameson (1991) reads *Blue Velvet* alongside *Something Wild* (Jonathan Demme, 1986) as examples of postmodern nostalgia film and argues that the formal, aesthetic

contradiction of these films “has a socially and historically symbolic significance of its own” (Jameson, 1991, p.287). As such, *Blue Velvet*’s Gothic and Oedipal narrative presents evil as an image, and as a parable of the end of the sixties the film “is also, on another metacritical level, a parable of the end of theories of transgression as well, which so fascinated that whole period and its intellectuals” (Jameson, 1991, p.295).

For Todd McGowan (2003, p.40), “Lynch’s films hold desire and fantasy apart as wholly separate [and thereby] uniquely facilitate an encounter with the gaze, even though this encounter is only ever momentary”. He argues that Lynch contrasts and keeps apart the public, “proper” world of Lumberton and its criminal underside (which are two sides of the same coin); with the space of desire manifested in Dorothy’s apartment⁴. Furthermore,

As a foreign body in the mise-en-scène, Dorothy embodies the gaze, and our anxiety in seeing her indicates our encounter with it, revealing that we are in the picture at its nonspecular point, the point of the gaze. Here, the object looks back at us. As in each of Lynch’s films, *Blue Velvet* strictly separates desire and fantasy so as to depict the traumatic point of their intersection.

(McGowan, 2003, p.43)

Laura Mulvey (1996), in her essay ‘Netherworlds and the Unconscious: Oedipus and *Blue Velvet*’, takes the film as a site not only of the Oedipal drama but also the uncanny and the Gothic. Consequently, she considers that one of its most significant achievements is the depiction of the archaic landscape and beliefs of the Gothic in the “New World”. In her reading of the Oedipus myth she considers a number of approaches including Vladimir Propp’s argument that the deviations in the story relate to changes in social circumstances from a system of inheritance based on marriage to one based on birth, from father to son. Secondly, she considers Jean-Joseph Goux’s contention that the Oedipus story acts as an initiation rite in which the Sphinx is a representation of the “monstrous maternal” and whose murder is essential for the rite of passage to take place. From this she then considers feminist

film theory's discussion/critique of the "monstrous maternal" and its persistence in popular culture.

She also considers the doubling in the Oedipus narrative of the Sphinx with Laius, Oedipus' father, and points out that the Proppian model does not have the scope to analyse this. Whereas, by taking on board other theoretical approaches to the myth, she suggests that Laius comes to take on the role of the "villain" function and the "monstrous maternal" is then transposed onto a monstrous paternal. She also draws attention to the Oedipus complex which, for Freud, is a rite of passage marking the transition from infancy to childhood. In Mulvey's analysis *Blue Velvet* negotiates a merger of the two versions by embedding the Oedipal narrative of transition within the story of passage from youth, rather than infancy, to maturity, in which:

Blue Velvet sends Jeffrey, not on the folk-tale's adventure into the liminal space away from home or outside the city, but on a journey into the Oedipal unconscious, to confront incestuous desire and the villainous father figure. In this sense, Frank represents the 'pre-Oedipal' father.

(Mulvey, 1996, p.142)

In particular, the joy-riding scene where Jeffrey is immolated by Frank, acts for Mulvey as a reminder of the repetition of the pre-story in the Oedipus myth of Laius's raping (and death) of Chrysippos, the young son of King Pelops of Sparta. She writes:

Perhaps desire for and fear of a powerful mother and the misogyny it generates conceals something even more disturbing, desire for and fear of a violent father. Perhaps it is the 'unspeakable' ghost of Laius that haunts relations between men, generating homophobic anxieties and an attraction bonded by physical violence represented by Frank's relationship to Jeffrey.

(Mulvey, 1996, p.199)

This is a suggestion which may offer a useful counterpoint to some of the other views of Lynch's work as purely misogynistic without considering what the perceived misogyny might fully connote.

Fred Pfeil's close reading of two extracts from the film leads him to state that:

What fascinates and appalls in *Blue Velvet*, what simultaneously underwrites and undermines the mixed messages of its generic play and desublimated Oedipality, is the sense of the fragility of the symbolic, its susceptibility to the metonymic 'disease' of constant slippage that is always already inside it, a *gynesis* of both film and family that irresolves without overthrowing, that keeps home un-natural while forcing us to own up to the familiarity of all that is officially Other and strange, that makes home-making a dislocating experience, from blue-sky beginning (plenitude or emptiness? True-blue or fake void?) to blue-sky end.

(Pfeil, 1993, p.238)

Further, he looks at the Reaganist politics of what he refers to as family *noirs*, *Blue Velvet* and *Terminator 2*, but argues that they can both be "read against the grain" so that, "the way to respond to the irresolute resolutions and rebellious conservatism of our films without reproducing their equivalents in theory is to recognize the legitimacy of the needs and desires that underlie the dynamic of the films' operations while refusing their opposed yet commingled terms" (Pfeil, 1993, p.256). Again, I would suggest that this approach allows us to consider the films from other angles, by being receptive but wary of accepting obvious readings, towards their obtuse potentialities.

C is for...Conservative (and reactionary) [See also entries under **A** for *Auteur* and **F** for Feminism]

Allied to the *auteur* approach is that of Lynch as a conservative, or as Alexander (1993, pp.178-179) puts it, "He is an old-fashioned wolf in post-modernist sheep's clothing – strip away the wool and Lynch emerges as a staunch conservative ill at ease in a loosely structured

modern world...There are no Democrat voicings of dissent in the Lynch world". Similar comments come from Andrew (1998), and Woods (1997, p.33) who argues that "what we see on screen is, quite genuinely, one man's unadulterated psychic slime". What he does not go on to question, however, is why a sizeable proportion of cinema goers, academics and critics, himself included, should want to watch and write about that psychic slime and what this might mean! Again, this approach, like that of *auteurism*, seeks to provide a form of disavowal whereby these critics can distance themselves from what they consider to be the more unpalatable aspects of the work.

Jeff Johnson's (2004) *Perververt in the Pulpit: Morality in the Works of David Lynch* is the work of a critic who, from an initial position of admiration for the films, is now bent on an "anti-evangelical" path to draw attention to the Calvinist, puritanical cant of the films. Unlike Johnson who draws attention to Lynch's use of "interstitial spaces where dreams and reality conjoin" to condemn the work, I will be seeking to investigate just what it means to explore such sites, because it is at such points that the films may be read otherwise, where intended meanings and ideological parameters might fail, where all those involved in the films, the film-makers and the viewers, might find something else, something unexpected and strange where we look for the familiar, and something familiar where we expect the strange. At these thresholds old meanings might fail and the possibility of new ones may come into focus (see below).

D is for... Dreams.

It is now almost a banal commonplace to refer to Lynch's films as offering a dream-like logic which breaks up notions of narrative linearity. However, while these works are often singled out in this regard we must bear in mind the strange dream-like logic of film itself. Indeed, the interrelationship between cinema and psychoanalysis is so closely enmeshed historically,

economically and socially that the ontologically uncanny nature of film has strangely come to be hidden behind the ideology of the Hollywood dream factory. When dreams are no longer thought of as dreams what do they become? That Lynch's films and their relationship to dreams are remarked upon is remarkable and speaks volumes about mainstream film production, distribution and exhibition. Further, this connection between Lynch's films and dreams might allow us to look back to the beginnings of cinema and seek out other pathways that bypass the determinism in which film has often been normalized within the context of the North American film industry, where an emphasis upon the contingent might open up other discursive means of rethinking Lynch's place within film history.



D is also for *Dune* (1984) which is absent from this thesis.

I can not bring myself to write about it – it drives me mad. Unlike Slavoj Žižek who claims this to be his favourite Lynch film, I cannot stand it! Although I have watched it many times and read all the critical work on it, I could not bear to work on/with/against it, I leave that for others. The film version of Frank Herbert's science fiction novel was shot in Mexico, with a colossal budget of \$45,000,000 and followed on after Lynch directed *The Elephant Man* (1980). The film was a flop at the box office, bringing in only \$27,400,000 dollars gross at the American box office (although it was popular in France), and being the main reason the production company went into liquidation. However, most sources seem to suggest that canny Dino De Laurentiis always ensured that his initial investment was recouped by other exhibition windows (which is now commonplace, but instituted by the mini-majors such as De Laurentiis, during this period). However, when Lynch came to suggest his ideas for *Blue Velvet*, De Laurentiis agreed, but on the basis of a small budget, and a reduced directorial fee for Lynch.

Dune always reminds me of BOB Dylan's 'Love Minus Zero/No Limit': "There's no success like failure/And that failure's no success at all", because the failure of *Dune* provided the opportunity for Lynch to make *Blue Velvet*. If the former film had been a success who knows what trajectory might have ensued for his subsequent career? In chapter 2 I will discuss the utopian possibilities of failure in more detail.

Sheen (2004) considers the film a fiasco rather than a failure, or in her neologism as a *fiascal*, in which she argues that it should be read with an emphasis on production rather than reception. Thus the film is symptomatic of changes in Hollywood production practices during the 1980s. Bearing this in mind she argues, and I would concur with her comments, that:

David Lynch is an exemplary instance of a director that many critics, and most film buffs, want to describe as an auteur, but whose working practices articulate the complexities of a system that has superseded the context to which the term can be applied.

(Sheen, 2004, p. 40)

D is also for...Duty [See also the entries for **A** for *Auteur* and **C** for Conservative].

The Lynchian archive is extensive if not entirely varied. Generally, there are many monographs and essays in which Lynch is treated as an *auteur*, as discussed above. Having read through all of these texts there is a sense in which the critical limits of this approach becomes evermore apparent. I would refer the reader to the bibliography for all of the sources consulted in this thesis, and I can make assurances that all of these have been read, noted and inwardly digested. However, in compiling this dictionary, I have sought to highlight only those texts and terms I have found to be most productive in "dealing" with the films under consideration. The others are available for consultation should the reader wish to appraise herself/himself of all of the secondary sources currently available on this body of work.

E is for... Early Films.

Lynch made his first film paintings as a student at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia in the late 1960s. His first “film”, *Six Men Getting Sick* of 1967, produced when he was a second year student, consisted of a specially designed sculpture-screen, the surface of which contained reliefs in the shape of heads and arms cast from Lynch’s body by his friend Jack Fisk, onto which a one minute film loop was projected. The animated film painting appeared on the screen in such a way that the sculpted heads appeared to be transformed into stomachs which caught fire and then vomited. A siren was used as the soundtrack to the piece.

Lynch explained the impetus behind his decision to work with film by stating that “I imagined a world in which painting would be in perpetual motion. I was very excited and began to make films which looked like moving paintings, no more and no less” (Quoted in Chion, 1995, p.10). Film allowed him to add sound and movement to the muteness and static nature of his paintings as well as an opportunity to extend beyond their frame. The link or interconnection between painting, movement and sound is integral to all of his film work. From his initial experiments he was encouraged to make a grant application to the American Film Institute who gave him a place and money to start work on *Eraserhead*.

In terms of translating paintings into narrative sequences for film Lynch has adhered to the teaching of Frank Daniel, Dean of the Czechoslovakian Film School, who taught him at the American Film Institute to construct films by putting down ideas for seventy scenes on 3 inch by 5 inch cards. This method of constructing film allows for discontinuity and a break up in the linear pattern of narrative, and, in part I would argue, accounts for the emphasis upon the visual (and acoustic) rather than reliance upon Hollywood narrative and generic structures in this body of work⁵.

F is for...Feminist critical approaches.

Lynch's films have attracted a range of responses from feminist critics. For some, such as Shattuc (1992), and George (1995), Lynch's world is unremittingly misogynistic. For others, such as Desmet (1995), the work may offer an opportunity to revise feminist theory in line with the work of Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva. In addition, some critics have suggested that the films can be read otherwise or against the grain. Even though Shattuc (1992, p. 87), for instance, regards the work as ultimately misogynistic, she states that "feminists need to focus on the process by which women read, resist, and even submit to postmodern culture. Therein lies the complexity of postmodern feminism: the 'lived' heterogeneity of feminist history".

Another piece of work I have found instructive, in this regard, is Sharon Willis' (1997) 'Do the Wrong Thing: David Lynch's Perverse Style' in her *High Contrast: Race and Gender in Contemporary Hollywood Film*. In this chapter she reads *Wild at Heart* as a film in which Lynch as *auteur* creates a signature style which hides social conservatism and racism behind an attractive postmodern veneer. Initially, this methodology would seem to fall into my critique of the inadequacies of an *auteur* approach. However, Willis has some important points to make and she is keen to problematize the notion of authorship. Taking the approach that the audience formation and critical responses are as important in the making of an *auteur* as the director, she goes on to suggest that "*Wild at Heart* seeks and imagines an audience that may accept its own unconsciously racist and sexist terms" (Willis, 1997, p.133). In tracing the racism of the film she looks to the opening scene where Sailor violently kills a black man called Sugar Ray Lemon, which she reads as one of at least three Oedipal sequences in the film. The other scenarios being the murder of Johnnie Farragut and the film's closing sequence presented from the point of view of the six year old Pace Ripley. The overt Oedipal

scenarios used by Lynch in his work hides, according to Willis, the socio-historical perspective. As such

Part of the thrill of Lynch's films, it seems, depends on our accepting the films' propositions that this Oedipal structure is the frame, the container, and the content. To accept this proposition, however, is to risk foreclosing any sociohistorical referentiality, any reading of the specific competing fantasies articulated within that structure... *Wild at Heart* works to present the manifest as the revealed latent content (the Oedipal scenario), while simultaneously obscuring, as a kind of latency, something that should be more evident: the racial overdeterminations of its violence, the connection between race and gender that is played out in its 'primal scenes'.
(Willis, 1997, p. 142)

In terms of gender she argues that "Lynch hates women's bodies; his camera is kindest to the dead female body and most vicious to the maternal one...Lula's body is treated as sadistically as Marietta's, but in a more sanitized manner" (Willis, 1997, p.149). In addition to this she argues that the audience accepts the racist and sexist connotations of the films because they are presented as "ironic" and which thereby neutralizes the racism and sexism. In this manner "Race and ethnicity become aesthetic effects to the extent that they function as the *nonaesthetic* 'real' against which this particular representational 'style' distinguishes itself" (Willis, 1997, p.22).

These are important issues and I will seek to address some of the concerns of feminist critics within the methodology section of this introduction, and then return to them at appropriate places within individual chapters of the thesis.

G is for...the Gaze.

In several of the commentaries upon Lynch's work references are made to Laura Mulvey's (1989) highly influential essay, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', both of a means of discussing the "male" gaze in relation to these films, in particular *Blue Velvet*; and in some

cases as suggesting other approaches to this concept. Therefore, it is important at this stage to reflect upon the notion and the use I will be making of it in this thesis.

I do not intend to fully elaborate Mulvey's much discussed essay, except in so much as to register its emphasis, particularly in relation to scopophilia in its narcissistic aspect, on Lacan's mirror stage. Now when we come to *Blue Velvet* we should acknowledge, as Mulvey herself does in her essay on the film, that:

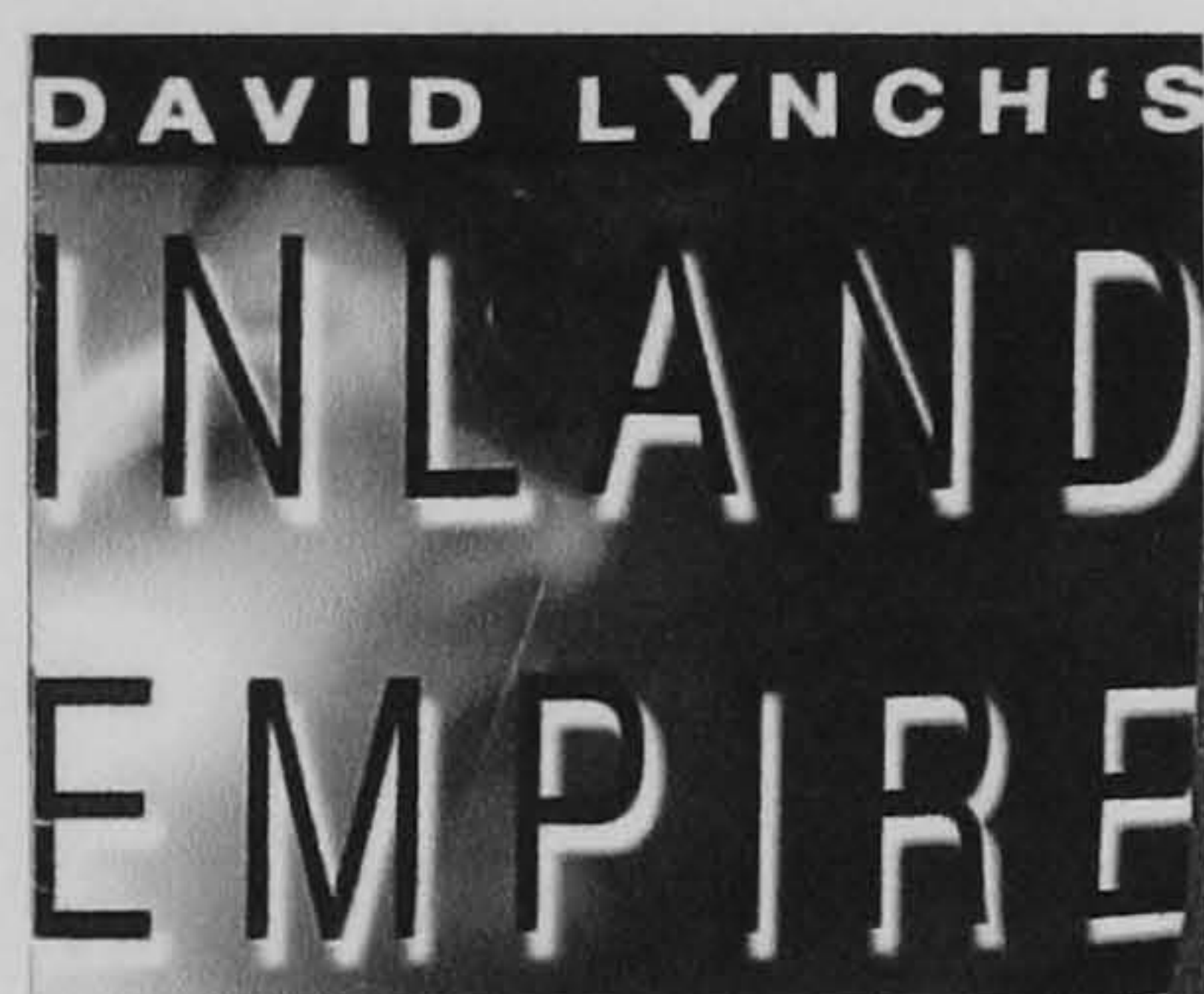
Blue Velvet is a film which knowingly uses the interface between persistent popular iconographies and psychoanalytic theory. The critic does not have to 'read in' or 'read against the grain', as both the generic and psychoanalytic references are clearly marked. It is probably only out of the self-consciousness of contemporary, post-modern Hollywood, in conjunction with Lynch's own influences such as Surrealism, and interests such as psychoanalysis, that such a film could appear.

(Mulvey, 1996, p. 138)

So the film's explicit use of voyeurism marks not the patriarchal unconscious that Mulvey's earlier essay was critiquing in respect of classical narrative cinema, but it openly acknowledges both generic and theoretical "knowledge", and thereby calls for a different theoretical approach.

In thinking about the concept of the gaze I have been drawn to Joan Copjec's work and, in particular, her essay 'The Orthopsychic Subject: Film Theory and the Reception of Lacan' in *Read My Desire: Lacan against the Historicists* (1995). In this piece she takes to task film theory's "central misconception" of Lacan, whereby the screen is conceived as a mirror, and thereby misses the more radical insight "whereby the mirror is conceived as screen" (Copjec, 1995, p. 16). What she proposes is a realignment of Lacan's work away from the mirror stage to his theory of the gaze, particularly as set out in Seminar XI. This change in emphasis marks a point of radical difference from earlier uses of Lacan in film theory as well as a significant point of divergence from Foucault's panoptican model of optics.

Likewise, in McGowan and Kunkle (eds.) *Lacan and Contemporary Film* (2004, p. xxviii), the editors discuss the relationship between the gaze and the Real which marks the point where film, and particularly contemporary film, occupies “a privileged site at which we constitute new desires, experiment with unhinging our fundamental fantasies, and imagine ways to resist the power of ideology”. And this reappraisal, or emphasis upon the gaze, provides for a renewal of theoretical approaches, particularly in light of anti- or non-psychoanalytic models or modes of address, to which I will return in the final section of this introduction, and throughout this thesis.



I is for... *INLAND EMPIRE*.

As I write Lynch is working on a new film which is due for release in 2006. Shot entirely on DV tape over the last two years in Poland and America this film, starring Laura Dern and Jeremy Irons, is said to be set in the inland valley of Los Angeles and it “is a mystery about a woman in trouble”. I await its release and look forward to having another film to add to the existing body of work beyond this thesis. In addition, this film raises interesting aspects about Lynch’s ongoing body of work and theoretical approaches to the changing nature of cinema. Theorists such as Sean Cubitt (2004) and Laura Mulvey (2004), to name but two, and practitioners such as Godard and Lynch, are developing ways of considering the film object from a digital perspective and thereby, as a form of deferred action, film (history) can be reviewed from another perspective, to see again what now may look different than before. Again, these are issues to which I will be returning.

I is also for... the Internet.

At present an initial search will come up with approximately 15 million results and the Internet has been, in respect of Lynch studies, a significant source of information and fan talk for some time. This was made particularly evident during the television airing of *Twin Peaks* when, as Henry Jenkins (1995, 1992) pointed out, fans would begin postings as soon as one episode finished and it became a vital ingredient in an interactive relationship between the TV show's interpretive communities.

How many "Lynch's" are there on the net?⁶ One for academics, for example, Stephen O'Connell's (1995) 'Detective Deleuze and the case of Slippery Signs'? One for general fans, e.g., Mike Dunn's Lynchnet? One for aficionados of particular works, e.g., *Dune* and the *Museum Arrakeen*? Do the various sites have anything in common, even David Lynch?

There are sites specifically studying the work from detailed theoretical perspectives. These range from university web pages where essays on Lynch are intermingled with other academic categories to individual essays such as Stephen O'Connell's mentioned above. There are also a number of dedicated sites, such as Mike Hartmann's *The City of Absurdity*, which provide a wealth of general information about Lynch's work together with a range of academic essays from around the world.

The vast majority of sites, however, can be categorized as populist, fan sites, which provide a vast amount of Lynch related information, e-mail lists, discussion boards and chat lines. The agenda of these sites is interesting and revealing. For example, *The Mysterious and Disturbing Films of David Lynch* (1998) states that it is "aimed at the fan, not the fanatic". The writer goes on to say that "Art is for interpretation, not solitary theories [and] that through your own interpretation, you will get a better understanding of the message he [i.e. Lynch] is trying to send out". The difference between interpretation and solitary theories is not developed however. This author regards "his" interpretation as non-theoretical, as "natural"

rather than as the product of an ideological position. The fan sites seem to suggest that they are somehow “closer” to the intended meanings that Lynch wishes to convey, that these authors act as quasi-mediums to the author-god. In this regard the Internet has taken on, in part, the role ascribed by spiritualism to photography in the nineteenth century. The web acts, for these fans, as a mediumistic form providing quasi-séance spaces for them to contact the “spirit” of the director to whom they feel they have privileged access and transmit this “knowledge” to like-minded fans. These comments are not meant to be disparaging but, rather, to recognize the Internet as another medium for the dissemination of various types or kinds of knowledge.

Lynch’s films acknowledge and celebrate multiple spatial and temporal arrangements much like the Net itself. The work allows for a wide range of decoding based around a fluid encoding structure which breaks down the rigidity of conventional linear narrative structures. The various interpretive communities exploring the depthless space of the Net may come into contact with each other, or, the interweaving of the computer terminals might be forever tracing different paths. The Net is a complex space where there would appear to be a number of “Lynchs”. The existence of such differing interest groups would therefore seem to suggest a variety of interpretations/interests between the interpretive communities. In this space the users can experience their own sense of being a part of the ongoing construction of meanings.

The arrival, in 2003, of Lynch’s own pay-to-use site ([David Lynch.com](http://DavidLynch.com)) provides another means of disseminating his artistic materials to which he appears to be devoting a large amount of attention. This outlet would seem to provide a potentially innovative exhibition space away from constraints of mainstream film production.



L is for... *Lost Highway* (1997).

This film has led to a substantial body of critical responses. Again several commentators seek to find Lynch “himself” in the work (Wallace 1996; Lyons 1997).

In their studies of various theoretical approaches to contemporary American films, Thomas Elsaesser and Warren Buckland (2002) provide a reading of *Lost Highway* using cognitivist theories of narration. In so doing, they suggest ways in which narrative theory may account for Lynch’s “uncanny”, which they define as “the powerful feelings the non-rational evokes in us” (Elsaesser and Buckland, 2002, p.168). They suggest that this approach allows them to explore the irresolvable ambiguities and inconsistencies in the film which produce a looped structure or Möbius strip rather than a linear format (Elsaesser and Buckland, 2002, p.186). However, I would argue that the approach adopted, which is similar to Martha Nochimson’s work (see the entry under N), is not entirely sufficient as a means of exploring the complexities of the uncanny and that the formal approaches to narrative used here only take us part-way to revealing the possibilities or multiplicities of meaning. This is a point to which I will return to later on in this introductory Chapter, and again in Chapter 6.

Todd McGowan (2000, p.51) argues that “Because the narrative of *Lost Highway* brings the logic of fantasy out into the open, it necessarily strikes us as incongruous, as a film without any narrative at all”. Marina Warner, however, suggests that although *Lost Highway* does figure a contemporary anguish about identity, it:

remains oddly bland, ultimately hollow...The film asserts an all American, suburban-Puritan belief in the idiosyncratic eyewitness and the visionary, the truth of an individual viewpoint and even of messianic derangement, while all the while conveying almost wearily that such subjectivity as idealised elsewhere has reached terminal decline.

(Warner, 1997, p.10)



M is for... *Mulholland Drive* (2001).

The film began life as a television pilot but when it was rejected by ABC Lynch went to Studio Canal+ who, partly due to the financial success they had experienced with *The Straight Story*, agreed to fund it as a feature length film. Warren Buckland (2003) provides a detailed explanation of the narrative and narration of *Mulholland Drive* in his primer, *Teach Yourself Film Studies* and points out that repetition replaces the logic of cause and effect in the film.

Heather K. Love (2004) argues that “*Mulholland Drive* takes up several of the most powerful and persistent images of the lesbian [and that] Lynch is not interested in challenging lesbian clichés; instead, he works almost exclusively through such clichés, exploring both the sweeping vistas and the back alleys of this stereotyped world” (Love, 2004, p.121). In so doing, the film “depicts lesbian fantasy as inextricably bound up with lesbian tragedy [and that] Diane Selwyn is a *structural effect* of homophobia, one of the tragic others that modernity produces with such alarming regularity” (Love, 2004, p.130). She concludes, nonetheless, that what is significant about the film is that Lynch treats her tragedy seriously. This is a point to which I will be returning in Chapters 3 and 5.

Amy Taubin suggests that it is his first film since *Eraserhead* to employ, in its entirety, the logic of the dream. Furthermore, that “*Mulholland Drive* is a lesbian love story, a fulfillment of the lesbian desire latent in *Blue Velvet*” (Taubin, 2001, p.53). But she goes on to say “that there is no conclusive evidence that the dreamer ever awakes. While the second half of the film transforms the meaning of the first half, it does so by reflecting one dream in its mirror opposite” (Taubin, 2001, p.54) (See also the entry under **D**...for Dreams.)

N is for...New Age (Nonsense) and... Martha P. Nochimson's (1997) *The Passion of David Lynch: Wild at Heart in Hollywood*.

Nochimson implicitly treats Lynch as an *auteur* on a par with Hitchcock and Orson Welles. She regards the Lynchian "subconscious" as the key to his work, and relates Lynch's use of the term with Jung, especially the latter's notion of the "collective unconscious", although she points out that Lynch would rewrite that term as the "collective subconscious" because "[a]s he says he is representing a level of nonrational energy on which all kinds of meaningful activity takes place, and for him the word unconscious means 'nothing is going on'"(Nochimson, 1997, p.6). Immediately we run into the problem of accepting only the *auteur*'s word as being sufficient as a means of analysis.

Nochimson, then, provides a definition of the Lynchian subconscious which, she says, is not "the logocentric Freudian tradition" (1997. p. 8), nor Lacan's work derived from Freud, but Merleau-Ponty's "wholeness" (1997, p.8). Therefore, in her reading "His [Lynch's] belief in the image as a possible bridge to the real does not depend on any abstract framework but rather on a visceral sense of the essential truth of an empathic – not solipsistic – relationship with art" (Nochimson, 1997, pp.9-10). In this analysis Lynch's work provides for a sense of optimism against the "pessimism" of two other highly influential twentieth-century modes of thinking, which, she argues, despair of the possibility of making connections between rational/linguistic structure and reality – Saussurean linguistics and Lacanian psychoanalysis. (Nochimson, 1997, p.18) In her account there is a form of pre-existing reality outside language into which Lynch's work feeds.

Her approach, for all the valuable things she has to say, is entirely dependent upon attacking the Saussurean, Freudian and Lacanian models. She makes no references to the Freudian unconscious in all of this, and constantly, and I would say, wilfully misreads Freud and Lacan because of her implacable opposition to their work. She argues, for example, that in

Eraserhead the image of the lady-in-the-radiator is “one of Lynch’s earliest representations of femininity as a joyous, active principle – not the dread-producing nothingness that provokes a fear of castration” (Nochimson, 1997, p.164). This is manifestly neither Freud’s nor Lacan’s position at all. As Laplanche and Pontalis (1973, pp.56-60) point out, the little boy fears castration as the carrying out of a paternal threat, while the little girl feels herself to have been deprived of a penis by the mother rather than by the father. As such, the castration complex accounts for the development of the child’s subjectivity not as its negation, as Nochimson argues.

For Nochimson, Lynch is the director in Hollywood who seeks to create work which provides a fresh approach to the question of gender identity and role play, in which “his” subconscious allows for a glimpse of a greater reality beyond the mundanity of everyday life and that this reality can be viewed through the lens of popular culture. That she provides this reading through a misreading of Saussure, Freud and Lacan in favour of a compilation of attitudes and views derived from Jung and Lynch is problematic to say the least. This approach seems to feed into a swathe of largely North American academic work which is set against a large portion of, predominately, Continental philosophy. Again this is a point to which I will be returning shortly.

R is for...Chris Rodley’s (ed.) *Lynch on Lynch* which comprises a series of interviews with the director discussing each film in turn. In his introduction Rodley quotes from Anthony Vidler’s (1992) *The Architectural Uncanny* and states that:

the uncanny – in all its nonspecificity – lies at the very core of Lynch’s work...However, the originality and inventiveness of Lynch’s work comes, first and foremost, from an unusual willingness and ability to access his own inner life. It is a consequence of the truthfulness with which he brings that inner life to the screen that Lynch has revitalized the medium.

(Rodley, 1997, p. ix)

So again there is an emphasis upon Lynch's inner life as forming the *auteurial* signature of these films. However, the development of ideas based around the uncanny allows Rodley to extend his analysis towards what I consider to be one of the fundamental components of this body of work. For Rodley (1997, pp.ix-x) Lynch's universe also consists of the collision of worlds creating a sense of unease because of the "cross-generic confusion, perceived by the audience as the absence of those rules and conventions that afford comfort and – most importantly – orientation". And this sense of "mood" or "uncertainty" in Lynch's work is linked, in this account, to a sense of confusion or intellectual uncertainty, or in Lynch's own words being "lost in darkness and confusion". Rodley uses Vidler's work on the uncanny to refer to the concept's cultural foundations in the work of Edgar Allan Poe and E.T.A. Hoffmann in which apparently benign interiors are transformed by an alien presence. Secondly, he refers to its psychological expression in which it comes to act as a metaphor of the double where the threat is perceived as a replica of the self and is all the more terrifying because its otherness is apparently the same. He goes on to argue that Lynch makes use of a spin on the double, Jekyll/Hyde syndrome, with characters such as Jeffrey/Frank in *Blue Velvet*, Leland Palmer/BOB in *Twin Peaks* and, Fred/Pete in *Lost Highway*. Lynch's use of the uncanny, he argues via Vidler, is related to the rise of the great cities which, as people became cut off from nature and the past, produced psychological disturbances and illness. The uncanny, as that state between dream and awakening, also comes to be seen within Modernist avant-garde "defamiliarization" and in particular, the work of the Surrealists. Rodley states that "In Freud's words: 'The uncanny is uncanny because it is secretly all too familiar, which is why it is repressed.' This is the essence of Lynch's cinema" (Rodley, 1997, p.ix. See also D for dreams). This is something to which I will be returning in Chapter 6.

S is for...Sin and suffering.

Many Lynchian characters sin and suffer. Laura Palmer is more sinned against than sinning and the quasi-theological scene of redemption in the Red Room in *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* may offer some form of cathartic redemption for the viewer. But can we ever be sure that these scenes are meant to be “real” or ironic or kitsch, or perhaps all three depending upon our viewpoints? For some critics (Johnson 2004) Lynch’s vision is entirely Calvinistic and religious; for others (Žižek) these scenes are meant to be taken seriously; while for others (Ayers 2004) it is through the use, or rather overuse, of religious kitsch and cliché that a weak form of affect might come into being for even the most jaundiced and cynical postmodern viewer (see Chapter 2).

S is also for... Erica Sheen and Annette Davison (eds.) (2004) *The Cinema of David Lynch: American Dreams, Nightmare Visions*. In their introduction the editors argue that:

Lynch’s films give aesthetic form to the synergies of post-classical Hollywood in a way no other contemporary film-maker’s work has done. If the intellectual consistency of his vision suggests that we might approach him as an auteur, the formal and generic range of his work raises questions about that status...Lynch displays an almost utopian sense of Hollywood as an ideal system of production that plays against his parallel perceptions of it as an oppressive commercial dystopia.

(Sheen and Davison, 2004, p.2)

They also refer to two main features of the films, these being a continuing engagement with the *noir* aesthetic and the juxtaposition of the homely with the strange as a recurring preoccupation of the book. I will be returning to both of these features throughout this thesis.

The twelve essays in this collection provide a wide range of approaches to the work including an essay by Sheli Ayers entitled ‘*Twin Peaks*, Weak Language and the Resurrection of Affect’. Using Walter Benjamin’s work on allegory, she argues that “*Twin Peaks* took viewers – at least those who stayed from beginning to end – through a passage from self-

conscious and ironic kitsch consumption (neo-kitsch) to a less self-conscious emotional involvement” (Ayers, 2004, p.103). This question of spectator involvement and affect is one to which I will return, in particular in Chapter 2.

S is also for...the subject and subjectivity.

Who is the subject undertaking this thesis? Referring to Raymond Williams’ (1983, pp. 308-312) entry in *Keywords*, one is made aware of the complicated history of the terms subjective and subject (as well as object and objective). In particular, the contrasting positions between the Cartesian subject, German classical philosophy and nineteenth century positivism, indicate that one has to be precise in the way one uses these terms. In addition to these distinctions, the psychoanalytical usage of the term subject, both refers to earlier uses and further complicates them by reference to the unconscious. Furthermore, the thinking subject who writes this dissertation under the illusionary Cartesian consciousness and mastery, is itself an indication of the split subject, where the shifter “I” that appears throughout the work identifies that “*The split is, in a sense, the condition of the possibility of the existence of a subject, the pulsation-like shift seeming to be its realization*” (Fink, 1995, p. 48).

Within this topological structure of the “individual” search for knowledge and the requirements of the university lies a desire for an illusionary form of mastery and a simultaneous acknowledgement that this may never be fully attained, but which is searched for in the epistemological travails that follow and which interlink with academic writing’s “Other” – the production of pleasure to accompany the writer’s love of these films. There is, potentially at least, another form of subjectivity that may emerge from the process of writing, or which might lead to its discovery at some point in the future. As Barthes (1975, pp.62-63) writes:

Whenever I attempt to ‘analyze’ a text which has given me pleasure, it is not my ‘subjectivity’ I encounter but my ‘individuality,’ the given which makes my body separate from other bodies and appropriates its suffering or its pleasure: it is my body of bliss I encounter. And this body of bliss is also *my historical subject*; for it is at the conclusion of a very complex process of biographical, historical, sociological, neurotic elements (education, social class, childhood configuration, etc.) that I control the contradictory interplay of (cultural) pleasure and (non-cultural) bliss, and that I write myself as a subject at present out of place, arriving too soon or too late (this *too* designating neither regret, fault, nor bad luck, but merely calling for a *non-site*): anachronic subject, adrift.

This form of “individuality”, in relation to contemporary ideas around art, film, thought and writing, leads me into the next entry.

T is for...theory, Theory, theories.

“The golden age of cultural theory is long past” Eagleton (2004, p. 1) tells us in *After Theory*. And the plethora of books which celebrate this fact, or bemoan it, point out that the idea of a metanarrative, like that of the unified Cartesian subject referred to above is a fallacy. So what are we left with? Eagleton (2004, p. 2) goes on to write, in his analysis of the current state of academic thinking, “For the moment, however, we are still trading on the past – and this in a world which has changed dramatically since Foucault and Lacan first settled to their typewriters. What kind of fresh thinking does the new era demand?”

For some film studies theorists, such as David Bordwell and Noël Carroll in the Post-Theory camp, the end of high theory is to be celebrated, where the straightjacket of certain orthodoxies are to be replaced by more middle-ground approaches. This is an area to which I will be returning in the next section of this introductory chapter, but here I want to consider how we have come to the position we are now in, from the heady days of structuralism to those of postmodern eclecticism.

However, it is not so easy to dispose of what has gone before. Cultural amnesia is not an easy operation, I am pleased to say. It is useful to rethink theory, what it is and what it can

do, rather than to reject, wholesale, what has gone before. Martin Jay (1998, p. 19) points out that many of the anti-theory approaches can “be traced back to the classical Greek meaning of *theoria* as a visually determined contemplation of the world from afar”. This sense of the all-seeing God-like gaze of the theorist, of the scopic regime of “Cartesian perspectivism” standing back from the object of study, is one that is hard to support. But, as Jay goes on to argue:

The larger point I want to make is that what we call ‘theory’ is a moment of reflexive self-distancing, a moment that subverts the self-sufficient immanence of whatever we happen to be talking about. It is precisely such internal distance that, *pace* certain neopragmatists, prevents even beliefs from being so seamlessly undisturbed by what are allegedly outside of them. For the very dichotomy of inside and outside is itself replicated within the seemingly immanent system of belief. As Niklas Luhmann has often argued, every system contains its own blind spots, its own paradoxical assumptions, which prevent the observer from being totally within or completely outside its boundaries. Those who yearn for an entirely immanent position are as deluded as those who think they can find one that is entirely transcendent. Their dreams of undisturbed plenitude are themselves fantasies of mastery, moves in the game of desiring control, that are ultimately as vain as those they attribute to the purveyors of theory. For absolute proximity is as hard to come by as that unbridgeable spectatorial distance supposedly allowing theoretical contemplation from afar.
(Jay, 1998, p. 28)

I start this thesis from a position of closeness to the images and sounds of Lynch’s films, from a position of love and (over)proximity to the images. As I seek to pull back, to gain a critical distance from the object of study, the images and sounds might be like those of two rack-focused shots moving from foreground to the middle ground and rear distance, and back again. The illusionary sense of theoretical speculation might be thought of as a sense of deep-focus, hoping to take in all the planes of representation at once. However, as the discussion above points out, the desire for theoretical completion, of total knowledge, is as illusory as that of “intuitive” knowledge unburdened by theory. The important “hermeneutic” arts of “looking”, “listening” and “reading”, with their intimate and proximate relation to the object of study (Jay, 1998, p. 25), need to be integrated with the Other of theory to fully develop the act of writing about works of art. This, I appreciate, is no easy task, but I hope that this

dissertation may provide a small step on the way to a renewed critical awareness of the possibilities of theory.

U is for...the unconscious (vs. subconscious).

Throughout the Lynchian archive one comes up, time and time again, against the term “subconscious” used to refer to the way Lynch mediates his films between himself as agent of intention and meaning and the viewers. The word is used, interchangeably, with that of *auteur* as a means of providing a link between Lynch the man and director with the film’s meanings. Often, little theoretical justification is given for the term although, from time to time, some writers do make references to the work of Carl Jung (for example, see the entry under N for Nochimson).

As Laplanche and Pontalis (1973, p.431) point out, the subconscious is a “Term used in psychology as a designation for what is scarcely conscious or even inaccessible to it. Used by Freud in his earliest writings as a synonym for ‘unconscious’, it was very quickly discarded because of the confusion it tends to foster”. There is a suggestion of a form of secondary consciousness in the term in opposition to which Freud used the term “unconscious” because of the negation it contains and which is thereby able to express the topographical split between the two domains. The unconscious, in both of Freud’s topographical structures, contains a negation and thus a radical alterity in which it erupts into consciousness via dreams and parapraxes, and, further, the Freudian unconscious is *constituted* and not made up of undifferentiated experience. Therefore, in relation to the critical responses to Lynch, we can see how the term “subconscious” allows these writers to maintain a link between the author and his works as accessed just beneath the *auteur*’s consciousness. This then allows them to maintain a distance of approval for parts they admire (usually style) and distance from those they decry (usually content) but sometimes both.

I want to suggest that the use of the term “subconscious” is ideologically motivated by these writers in an attempt to maintain some notion of the *auteur* theory, against which I will argue that a more detailed and sustained analysis of Lynch’s work may produce more fruitful readings.



W is for... *Wild at Heart* (1990).

The film was made on a budget of \$9,500,000, during the making of *Twin Peaks*, and fared well at the box office grossing \$14,560,247 in the USA alone. It received the Palme d’Or at Cannes which was “a choice received with as many catcalls as cheers” (Malcolm and Christie, 1990, p.198). Similarly, the critical reviews were not all kind.

Jean-Luc Godard, in conversation with Wim Wenders, argues that most commercial films are too long and that “David Lynch’s *Wild at Heart* should last ten minutes, then it would be a good film” (Wenders and Godard, 1991, p.22). Unfortunately, Godard doesn’t tell us which ten minutes the film should comprise of, but I should like to see his edited version of it. (See, in addition, Willis’ entry under F for feminist critical approaches). From this brief comment on the film from one of the founders of the *Nouvelle Vague* who continues his ongoing *Histoire(s) du cinema* I now want to consider where I will go from here in my deliberations, to consider further Lynch’s place in the history and practice of cinema.



Figures 3 and 4. Agent Cooper explains his “Tibetan Method” of detection in Twin Peaks. (Twin Peaks Online, 2005)

Text means Tissue; but whereas hitherto we have always taken this tissue as a product, a ready-made veil, behind which lies, more or less hidden, meaning (truth), we are now emphasizing, in the tissue, the generative idea that the text is made, is worked out in a perpetual interweaving; lost in this tissue – this texture – the subject unmakes himself, like a spider dissolving in the constructive secretions of its web. Were we fond of neologisms, we might define the theory of the text as an *hyphology* (*hyphos* is the tissue and the spider’s web).

Roland Barthes (1975, p.64)

In summary, there appear to be five main approaches to Lynch’s work in the secondary sources. I am aware that I may be doing these writers a grave disservice by lumping them together into general categories, but, these fictive “nets”, like Barthes’ photographic example of “Italianicity” (Barthes, 1977, Illustration XV11) are to act as metaphoric containers for a variety of ingredients of “Lynchicity”, from which the ingredients may spill out as one form of excess amongst others in the archive.

One main strand of critical response is that Lynch is undoubtedly an *auteur* whose work is aesthetically progressive but conservative in terms of subject matter (Alexander, 1993; Andrews, 1998; Atkinson, 1997; Kaleta, 1993). For these writers, Lynch’s work is stylistically exciting but the aesthetic “hides” a deeper conservatism. So, for instance, Alexander argues that Lynch’s work is inherently conservative behind its slick, postmodern, veneer. But, what if the postmodern veneer is actually conservative? If we then look to Frederic Jameson’s work

on nostalgia film we can see that these formal, aesthetic contradictions have “a social and historically symbolic significance of its own” (Jameson, 1991, p.295). In Jameson’s analysis this significance is to act as a parable of the end of the theories of transgression as well.

A second approach finds both the form and context conservative and reactionary (Darke, 1994; Dargis, 1995; Shattuc, 1992; and Willis, 1997). For these commentators there is not much to recommend in Lynch’s universe. The aesthetics of the work are part and parcel of the misogynistic, racist and anti-disabled discourse of the texts.

The third approach reads the work as attesting to a form of New Age wholeness (Nochimson, 1997). This form of Jungian reading is one that Žižek (2000) forcefully rejects.

The fourth approach is one in which Lynch’s work can be read differently or “otherwise” (Creed, 1988; Mulvey, 1996; Stern, 1991) which provides opportunities for feminist and other critical approaches to develop further their analyses beyond the constraints of any perceived conservatism of the work to explore the connotations in much more detail.

The fifth approach reads the work from Lacanian and other psychoanalytic perspectives and is, in part, a response and reaction to some of these other approaches (Žižek, 1994, 1995, 2000, 2001a, 2001b; and McGowan 2003).

Theory/Post-Theory

In terms of my methodology the fourth and fifth approaches are of particular interest, as well as being revealing, in relation to debates in Film Studies in respect of Theory and Post-Theory. Indeed, Žižek (2001; 2000) and McGowan (2003) can partly be read as responses to the arguments of *Post-Theory* (Bordwell and Carroll, 1996) and subsequent elaborations from this camp. And *Post-Theory* can be read as an attempt to dismantle what these editors perceive as the overarching paradigm of “Theory” which they regard as inherently Lacanian in mode.

I do not want to rehearse all of the arguments put forward in this debate, but it is important to highlight certain aspects of the disputes as a means of expressing the rationale

behind my methodology. Briefly, the argument put forward by the Post-Theoreticians is set against what they refer to as the Grand Theory established “in Anglo-American film studies during the 1970s...that aggregate of doctrines derived from Lacanian psychoanalysis, Structuralist semiotics, Post-Structuralist literary theory, and variants of Althusserian Marxism” (Bordwell and Carroll, 1996, p.xiii). But it is clear from most of the work in *Post-Theory* that the actual focus of their attack is Lacanian psychoanalysis, particularly as it has been used in (Anglo-American) film studies.

They go on to state that “if there is an organizing principle to the volume, it is that solid film scholarship can proceed without employing the psychoanalytic frameworks routinely *mandated* by the cinema studies establishment” (Bordwell and Carroll, 1996, p.xiii, emphasis added). The approach they put forward as an alternative and rival to “Theory” is “a middle-range inquiry that moves easily from bodies of evidence to more general arguments and implication” (Bordwell and Carroll, 1996, p.xiii). Several of the contributors to the book use a cognitivist approach which Bordwell and Carroll argue is a stance rather than a theory. Furthermore, “A cognitivist analysis or explanation seeks to understand human thought, emotion, and action by appeal to processes of mental representation, naturalistic processes, and (some sense of) *rational agency*” (Bordwell and Carroll, 1996, p.xvi, emphasis added). They also suggest that the historical studies put forward by two contributors also offer alternatives to psychoanalysis.

Reading Noël Carroll’s introductory essay one gets a sense of a beleaguered academic who feels aggrieved at the treatment he has suffered at the hands of the “Lacanianists” with charges of formalism levelled against him (and his colleagues). One can “feel” the intensity of the debates and “battles” experienced in the Anglo-American academy. After a long and detailed exegesis of the cognitivist position vis-à-vis the “Lacanian” model Carroll ends with a bitter attack on the “Theory”: “I have no illusions about the possibility of converting them;

thus I make no concessions in portraying how dreadful their Theory is” (Bordwell and Carroll, 1996, p.68). He then throws down the gauntlet in the following manner:

Inasmuch as film theory is a dialectical procedure, it now falls to psychoanalytic film theorists to show how they can negotiate the *special burden of proof with which cognitivists confront them* and to account for how psychoanalytic film theory is possible in the absence of the sort of empirical base that psychoanalytic theory, outside the environs of film and literature departments, requires.

(Bordwell and Carroll, 1996, p.67, emphasis added)

I have to say that I have yet to be confronted with this “special burden of proof” to which he refers. In all the readings I have undertaken in respect of cognitivist or other Post-Theory approaches, as well as papers delivered at conferences, I have yet to “see” any empirical evidence used to back up their arguments. Often argument and assertion seems to appear from thin air without the evidence one would expect from such an approach. Also there seems to be an implicit sense of theoretical protectionism in some of these attacks – of seeking to protect Anglo-American academic values against the excesses and deleterious effects of Continental thought!

What has been the response from the psychoanalytic camp? In his ‘Introduction: The Strange Case of the Missing Lacanians’ to *The Fright of Real Tears: Krzysztof Kieślowski between Theory and Post-Theory*, Slavoj Žižek argues that while the Post-Theorists attack is ostensibly against a range of Structuralist and Post-Structuralist theories, it is, in effect, levelled largely against Lacanians. And, as Žižek points out:

except for Joan Copjec, myself and some of my Slovene colleagues, I know of no cinema theorists who effectively accepts Lacan as his or her ultimate background. The authors usually referred to as Lacanians (from Laura Mulvey to Kaja Silverman) as a rule ‘engage with’ Lacan: they appropriate some Lacanian concepts as the best description of the universe of patriarchal domination, while emphasizing that Lacan remained a phallogocentrist who uncritically accepted this universe as the only imaginable framework of our socio-symbolic existence.

(Žižek, 2001b, p.2)

What *Post-Theory* appears to have done is to galvanize the Lacanian community to revolt against psychoanalysis being used in a routine and “wrong” fashion. As Žižek (2001b, p.7) goes on to say, “the reading of Lacan operative in the 70s and 80s was a reductive one – there is ‘another Lacan’ reference to whom can contribute to the revitalization of cinema theory”. And this Lacan is that of the Real as opposed to the readings of the Imaginary and the Symbolic posited in the 70s and 80s largely by reference to Lacan’s mirror stage.

Similarly, Joan Copjec (1995, pp.15-38) argues against the misreading of Lacan via a Foucaultianisation of the mirror stage in Film Studies in the same period, in which the (cinema) screen was read as a mirror, whereas, the more radical Lacanian insight is that the mirror should be read as a screen.

In addition, Todd McGowan’s (2003) article in *Cinema Journal* is a defence of Lacanian film theory against the attacks of the Post-Theorists. As such he argues that rather than retrenching in the face of such attacks, “[t]he proper response, therefore, is to expand Lacanian analysis of the cinema – making it even more Lacanian” (McGowan, 2003, p.28). To do this is to grasp the full, radical, conception of the gaze as theorized in Lacan’s later work. One of the examples used by McGowan is Lynch’s *Blue Velvet*, previously referred to under that film’s title in the alphabet.

In their introduction to the collection of essays in *Lacan and Contemporary Film* the editors, Todd McGowan and Sheila Kunkle (2004), argue that film theory’s use of Lacan in the 1960s and 1970s had relied on a narrow use of his work. In particular, too much emphasis was placed on the mirror stage and the category of the Imaginary at the expense of the “near-total exclusion of the Real” (McGowan and Kunkle, 2004, p.xiii). In contrast, the essays in this collection focus on the category of the Real and the gap in the Symbolic that arises where the Symbolic fails. And, as such, the essays look at the ways in which the ideological dimension of film “lies in its ability to offer a fantasy scenario that delivers us from a traumatic Real” (McGowan and Kunkle, 2004, p.xviii). In addition to this, the editors also

argue that previous uses of Lacan in film theory had resulted in undue emphasis being placed on spectatorship whereas their collection of essays concentrate on the filmic text itself, which incorporates an analysis of the text and the reception that each text calls for from the spectator, so that text and spectator cannot be separated out. So, as they go on to state, “psychoanalytic interpretation involves isolating the traumatic Real through its effects within the text” (McGowan and Kunkle, 2004, p.xxii). They link this mode of interpretation to Lacan’s use of formalization to suggest that the contemporary subject is facing a changing psychic reality in which film can be regarded “as a privileged site at which we constitute new desires, experiment with unhinging our fundamental fantasies, and imagine ways to resist the power of ideology” (McGowan and Kunkle, 2004, p.xxviii).

In *Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Play of Shadows*, Vicky Lebeau argues for a shift away from the dominant Freud-Lacan paradigm towards a new set of questions and responses from a range of psychoanalytic thinkers, such as D.W. Winnicott, André Green and Christopher Bollas, whose work has “figured hardly at all in contemporary film theory” (Lebeau, 2001, p.119).

Likewise, in the collection of essays edited by Janet Bergstrom (1999) there is a call from some of the contributors towards other psychoanalytic approaches to cinema, in addition to those currently in sway. For instance, Ayako Saito’s essay ‘Hitchcock’s Trilogy: A Logic of Mise en Scène’ uses André Green’s work on affect as a means of investigating three highly analyzed films: *Vertigo*, *North by Northwest* and *Psycho*. Janet Bergstrom’s contribution, ‘Chantal Ackerman: Splitting’ also uses Green’s work, this time his essay ‘The Dead Mother’ to address “a paradox in the representation of mother-daughter relationships in Ackerman’s films” (Bergstrom, 1999, p.14).

At a conference held in 2003⁷ the psychoanalyst Juliet Mitchell argued that there was a need to look to other psychoanalytic approaches, such as D. W. Winnicott’s work in *Playing Reality*. At the same conference Mary Kelly argued that the relationship between a work of art

at the point of production and reception called for a psychoanalytical reading capable of interpreting the recalcitrant object which is in turn cultural.

At the current time there are several edited collections of essays, such as Dana Arnold's and Margaret Iversen's (eds.) *Art and Thought* (2003), Parveen Adams' (ed.) *Art: Sublimation and Symptom* (2003), and Gavin Butts' (ed.) *After Criticism: New Responses to Art and Performance* (2005) which offer intellectually exciting means of rethinking the relationship between art, its production and its reception.

In a very real sense, therefore, Noël Carroll's demand for a greater dialectical approach in film studies, cultural theory and criticism generally, in which the psychoanalytic community (and other theoretical approaches) would have to respond to his charges has been met, and which has resulted in some ambitious and stimulating approaches. This would seem to suggest that high-level and middle-level approaches can develop alongside each other, dialectically interacting in the way he suggests.

However, having said that, my interest is not in middle-level approaches such as cognitivism. It appears to me that the most exciting critical responses to Lynch's work, and film generally, is coming from "Theory", to use Bordwell and Carroll's pejorative use of the word. This is not to say, however, that I will be adopting a strict Lacanian perspective throughout. Rather, it is my intention to use a range of theoretical positions as a means of investigating these texts in a productive manner. However, it seems important to acknowledge and work with the non-rational elements of Lynch's work, which, I would argue, would fall outside the purview of the middle-level approaches.

One of the charges David Bordwell levels against "Theory" is its use of argument as bricolage in which, "Far from being a coherent system, this Grand Theory was a patchwork of ideas" (Bordwell and Carroll, 1996, p.21). He argues that these "subject-position theorists and culturalists" missed portions of the theories which contradicted each other, ignored other language based approaches, such as Chomsky's work, and that such theorists "tend to shy

away from inductive, deductive, and abductive reasoning. They rely upon remarkably unconstrained association” (Bordwell and Carroll, 1996, p.23). And, as part of his critique of such work, he singles out Joan Copjec’s essay on *Double Indemnity* (Copjec, 1993, pp.167 – 198). However, in support of middle-level research Bordwell calls for pluralism, and argues that “Middle-level questions can cut across traditional boundaries” (Bordwell and Carroll, 1996, p.28), yet, presumably, without the inherent problems he perceives in “Grand Theory”.

Coming to these debates as an interested observer, without being party to the internecine struggles that have taken place, certainly within the North American film studies establishment, I have relied upon the texts I have found to be intellectually demanding, exciting, productive and useful. For instance, a writer whose work I admire, contra Bordwell, is Joan Copjec, who writes about her path through to a specifically Lacanian mode of address over a long period of time. As such *Read My Desire: Lacan against the Historicists* (1995) can be read as a summation of many years of critical endeavour to find that path.

Bordwell and Carroll also level accusations against “Theory” being trotted out and used in a mundane and banal fashion. In reply some “Theorists” have indeed responded by saying that this had often been the case. What I aim to do in the following chapters is to put theory to work, to test it against these texts, not in a pre-ordained manner to prove any initial hypothesis I may hold, but rather, to investigate how useful or otherwise certain critical tenets are in relation to these texts.

In addition, I also want to invoke feminist theory and criticism as it has developed, particularly in the work of Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray, as a means of exploring some of the criticisms that have been levelled against Lynch’s work as misogynistic. For example Kristeva’s semiotic chora and notion of the thetic permits us to think about the interruptions the semiotic provides within the Symbolic, which I hope, may allow me to rethink or extend some of the discussions that have taken place around these works. In particular, Barbara Creed’s essay on *Blue Velvet* raises some very important points in relation to the female

spectator's position in respect of this film (see the entry under *Blue Velvet*), as does Sharon Willis' essay on *Wild at Heart* in which she talks about the erasure of the racial dimension under the Oedipal and sexual one. She also suggests that Lynch hates and treats women's bodies sadistically. These are important points and at this stage I would like to keep them in mind so that I can come back to them later on as I move through my areas of concern. These aspects alert me to issues that should not be ignored, and I hope that I will be able to do justice to them.

As many of the secondary sources treat Lynch as an *auteur* I feel I need to consolidate my views on this term, to position myself from the outset, so that I do not have to keep returning to it throughout my thesis. Broadly, I adopt positions from Barthes and Foucault in relation to the figure of the author. Barthes' argument about the death of the author are well known, and indeed contested. In several quarters there have been attempts to bring the author back in to the frame (see for example, Burke 1998). However, as Barthes (1977, p.148) writes, "Once the Author is removed, the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile. To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing".

However, Foucault's explication of the notions of the author's name and the author function shows just how difficult it is to completely dispose of these ideas. As Rifkin (2000, p.5) puts it: "in Michel Foucault's terms, the concept of an author is a notion, one that we need, but that we must also try to set aside. For if we allow this notion to be invaded by its other, by an uncontainable otherness, its specific form might be newly refigured". In his book on Ingres, Rifkin (2000, p.1) refers to the staging of an artist as "the elaboration of a series of overlapping frames, set-ups or viewpoints which share some of their signs or contents, but which otherwise are quite specific or *sui generis*". This notion of staging appears to me to be most useful as a means of investigating Lynch's work. A great many of the secondary sources on Lynch seek to restrict the meaning of the work by referring it back to the figure of the

author. So while several critics are captivated, for instance, by the aesthetic strategies of the work, they can pull back from any unconstrained admiration or distance themselves from any accusations of misogyny or racism in the work by saying that is all the fault of Lynch the author. This seems to me to be of limited use critically. Seeking to constrain meaning to Lynch as *auteur*, in whatever guise, is to limit the potential for these texts to be read alongside others, and thus refigure the archive in more productive ways.

In so doing, we could, for example, read the archive diagonally, skimming along in a form of atonal logic as Deleuze (1988, p.2) suggests that Foucault does by reading statements rather than the existing philosophical paradigm of propositions and phrases. We can skim across figures of meaning, or modalities of theory and practice, to relate what might appear divergent forms of artworks and ideas and concepts together. For instance, in looking for metaphors or specific artworks to relate to my approach to the Lynchian archive I was drawn to the work of Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, and in particular, *The Muriel Lake Incident* of 1999.



Figure 5. Janet Cardiff in collaboration with George Bures Miller, *Muriel Lake Incident*, video and mixed media, 1999, (Artfacts, 2005).

I first came across the piece at Tate Modern and then subsequently at Tate Liverpool. At first I nearly walked past it not being sure of what it was. It did not look like a piece of

sculpture, this prosaic box on legs with three people with headphones on looking into it. I came back to it later, intrigued to see what was inside, curious to see what they had seen. Putting on the headphones and looking into the miniature cinema auditorium, watching the depicted film while listening to the sounds of “audience” members, while at the same time being aware of sounds all around me as other people in the gallery sought to find out what else was in this box, was arresting, acoustically as well as visually.

The second time I saw the piece I remember being confused as the sound of the imaginary cinema crowd running from the miniature auditorium as the film screen appears to burst into flames uncannily coincided with a number of gallery visitors rushing past me at the same time, giving rise to a momentary fear that something serious was amiss in my space. The piece conjures up many interesting facets of spectatorship in relation to the object: spectatorial curiosity; the coming into and out of subjectivity; the connections between the desire for narrative, to know or to seek to understand what is going on and its interruptions; the importance of sound in the interaction with the artwork; and the role of film within the fine art gallery situation – all seemed to be relevant to my investigations of Lynch’s work.

Lynch’s films seem to straddle a number of borders between film and fine art. In Rifkin’s terms there may be unstageability in reference to Lynch – the secondary sources appear, initially, to suggest this. The films reference avant-garde artistic practice and they also operate within mainstream cinema, although at its edges, which perhaps explains, to a degree, Lynch’s status within the Hollywood film industry. The form and style of these works, rather than suggesting lack of narrative comprehension or being split between form and content, as some of the commentators have suggested, might actually attest to a more overdetermined relationship between film and (post)modernity. As such, the approach I intend to take, utilizing a largely socio-psychoanalytic mode of address, might allow me to tease out some interesting connections and ideas that may have been overlooked thus far. For most of the materials to date relate to the complete works of Lynch and the monographs, at least, tend to

provide a chronological review and commentary on each film. I do not wish to deny the validity of such since an approach as this has produced interesting work. In a sense it has freed the field up so that other areas can be investigated, micro-studies if you will. Some of these may appear, initially, perverse but I hope that they will provide for some rethinking of the Lynchian field that may have been unnoticed. The themes or concepts under consideration have arisen as part of the research process. These are not ideas I want to impose on the texts as a way of “proving” theory; rather, they are ideas that have come to light during the process of thinking about this body of work and trying to find productive and useful means of working with the texts – of putting theory to work. Whether it does so or not remains to be seen and cannot be guaranteed at the outset.

Therefore, in Chapter 2, I want to take the theological and philosophical concepts of immanence and transcendence, particularly as utilized by Walter Benjamin, and apply these to the final scene with Agent Cooper and Laura Palmer in the Red Room at the end of *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*. By referring to Benjamin’s *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, together with the famous and influential article ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’ I hope to be able to suggest how this incipit might make sense, both within the text itself and also within a wider cultural context. I will also refer to Elisabeth Bronfen’s *Over Her Dead Body: Death, femininity and the aesthetic* as a means of comparing Agent Cooper and Laura Palmer’s roles within *Twin Peaks* in relation to these concepts.

In contrast to this close reading of a small extract from one film, Chapter 3 is taken up with an investigation of excess in Lynch’s films, and in particular, the themes of tears and time within the work. This will give me the opportunity of referring to a number of films and relate these Lynchian examples to discussions and debates about genre in film. For if my initial, working, hypothesis in this regard is correct, then part of the reason for Lynch’s unstageability may be the generic confusion about the role tears plays in some of these texts. The main theoretical references I will be employing in this chapter are Tom Lutz’s *Crying:*

The Natural & Cultural History of Tears (1999) and James Elkins (2004) *Pictures & Tears*, alongside Joan Copjec's work on crying, as a means of discussing the relationship between still and moving (in all senses of the word) images (and sounds).

Chapter 4 takes as its starting grid, and point of departure, the road and vehicles within Lynch's films. In comparing these texts to other road movies I will be using films from the 1940s through the 1960s and 1970s, for instance *Detour* (Edgar G. Ulmer, 1945), *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, 1969) and *Vanishing Point* (Richard C. Sarafian, 1971), up to *Crash* (David Cronenberg, 1997). Part of the rationale behind these choices is a deliberate attempt to confront the two time frames of the 1950s and 1980s, which several critics have suggested are symptomatic of Lynch's inherent conservatism and conformism. By using examples of other road movies over a period of approximately half a century, I will consider how Lynch's films relate to the tropes of the road movie, to compare and contrast these films with other examples of the genre, to ascertain whether Lynch's films are inherently conservative or symptomatic of the genre itself. Also, I wish to look closely at Parveen Adam's (2003) complex and intriguing work on David Cronenberg's film *Crash* of 1997 to see whether the same Lacanian topological structure Adam's reads from that film pertains to some of Lynch's work.

In Chapter 5, I take the psychoanalytic theory of *Nachträglichkeit* or deferred action (*après-coup* in Lacanian terminology), to investigate the logic of narrative and trauma in several of Lynch's films. Taking *Lost Highway* as my starting point I will relate how the theory of deferred action of trauma can be related to other films by reference, inter alia, to *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (Alain Renais, 1959) and *Detour* (Edgar G Ulmer, 1955). By looking at European art cinema and Hollywood B-movies I hope to be able to place Lynch's work within a wider view of film history.

Chapter 6 is directed towards the uncanny and its role within this entire body of work. Several commentators (Mulvey, 1996; Rodley, 1997; and Vidler, 1992) have discussed the important role the uncanny takes on in these works, as being immanent within them rather

than as themes or motifs. I will be focussing upon a selection of extracts from a variety of the films. By starting with Freud's essay *Das Unheimliche*, ('The "Uncanny"' of 1919), and relating this to Lynch's work via a large body of writings on the subject, including Nicholas Royle's (2003) book *The Uncanny*, I hope to be able to contribute to an understanding of the role of the uncanny in contemporary discourse and the fundamentally uncanny nature of film ontologically.

In the concluding chapter I hope to be able to bring together, without seeking to impose a final signified, the various strands to this dissertation. Whether I will be able to do so, via some form of writing which may resemble a Möbius strip, or some other topological structure which at the outset seems appropriate for the work under consideration, remains to be seen and cannot be mapped out in advance. If the links in the signifying chain fall apart it will not be the fault in the Lynchian universe, (to use a mix of Lynchian and Lacanian terminology), that is to blame – it will mostly be down to my readings of the Lynchian archive.

As a point of departure on to the main body of the thesis I leave this introduction with one of Lynch's photographs of an empty sofa from which smoke emanates from what appears to be one of its quilting points, or it may be from a hole that has been inserted into the fabric (Figure 6). Anyhow, at this *point de capiton* it is clear that smoke can bypass the material and make its way through into the air beyond, much like the excesses of the films themselves. So, while I seek to make some sense of these works there is another sense in which the irrational or non-sense, or immoderation of the texts might speak for themselves, in a "language" hard yet to decipher. In his introduction to the Wolf-Man case Sigmund Freud (1979, p.239) reminded himself of "the wise saying that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy". Likewise Major Briggs repeats this saying in *Twin Peaks* after Leland Palmer's death as a means of seeking to come to terms with the traumatic events encountered. In between these iterations and beyond into the present we have our philosophy

as it currently exists, which will form the basis of the deliberations that follow. While we contend with current thought we should perhaps bear in mind Deleuze's (1988, p.97) comments on Foucault's work that "The unthought is therefore not external to thought but lies as its very heart, as that impossibility of thinking which doubles or hollows out the inside".



Figure 6. (Lynch, 1994, p.192)

Ever Died? Ever Failed? No Matter. Die Again. Fail Again. Fail Better.
Immanence and Transcendence in *Twin Peaks* (with apologies to Samuel
Beckett)¹

In heaven, everything is fine.

As sung by the Lady in the Radiator in *Eraserhead* (1976)

Tirelessly the process of thinking makes new beginnings, returning in a
roundabout way to its original object.

Walter Benjamin (2003, p.28)

“The ‘*Trauerspiel*’ [Mourning-Play] should fortify the virtue of its audience” (Benjamin,
2003, p.61).



Figure 7. The Waiting Room, *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992)
(Twin Peaks Online, 2005)

I want to start at the end. But this ending is really a beginning, although it is the beginning of what has already been and now is no longer as it previously was, because of these closing moments which have, in one sense, already taken place, and which predate the events to which they, after the initial incident, gave rise to – namely the murder of Laura Palmer and the detection of her killer. Therefore, this conclusion is, in effect, immanent within the rest of the story; it cannot be clearly delineated from the events that predate it, nor those that follow afterwards. So we do not have a clear sense of cause and effect any longer, nor closure to this story; and in temporal and spatial terms where are they - the characters we watch on screen? And where are we – the viewers who look on? Where is this wistful place and time; this sad, beautiful though meager, mournful, dream-like space to which I now crave to return?

Waiting and wondering

Let me elaborate. In the final scenes of *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me* (1992) Laura Palmer is brutally killed by her father, who is “filled” with the evil BOB, and then her dead body is wrapped in plastic to be sent floating on water, to be discovered as she was at the beginning of the television series. In the film the events depicting her initial discovery are shown in slow motion and then the camera glides into the Red Room, where Leland and Bob had already been seen previously in the first chamber of the Black Lodge with the One-Armed Man and the Man from Another Place immediately following the murder. But this time, the “spirit” of Laura floats through the first, now empty, chamber into the second “Waiting Room”². Agent Cooper, who in the television series arrives in Twin Peaks after her murder, is now already with Laura (Figure 7). He looks down with beneficence upon her, laying his right hand on her left shoulder. From her seated position Laura looks up at his kindly face. She is immaculately made-up and clothed in a black cocktail dress bedecked with a large, decorative, silver brooch which echoes her ornate silver ear rings. Her hair cascades beautifully, curling around her head and shoulders. The Red Room, although sparsely furnished, is rich in colour, surrounded

as it is by red drapes through which light shines from the spaces beyond. Apart from the deep, comfortable-looking, though somewhat battered by use, art deco chair Laura sits on, there is a side table to her right upon which stands a lamp in the shape of the planet Saturn. At right angles to Laura and Cooper are two other chairs, similar to the one she sits on, behind which two up lighters are separated by a *Venus Pudica* statue. The floor consists of an alternating black/brown and cream zigzag pattern, which is reminiscent of other such places in Lynch's work such as the stage setting for the Lady in the Radiator in *Eraserhead*.

As "Saintly" Cooper touches Laura's shoulder she looks out in front of her. Then her face appears to be shocked or jolted from her melancholia as she is lit up by a blue glow as she sees, and then we the viewers are shown, an angel³ hovering in mid-air against what appear to be purple coloured drapes; or rather, red drapes whose colour is transformed by the light shining upon the angel to give a full, theological, Lenten signification to what we are presented with (Figure 8).



Figure 8. The angel in the Red Room, *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992) (Twin Peaks Online, 2005)

Laura begins to cry and as her head moves back her mouth opens wide as tears slide down her cheeks. But these tears turn from grief to joy and she starts to laugh in a manner reminiscent of William Blake's (1790, p.151) expressions in 'The Marriage of Heaven and Hell' that "Excess of sorrow laughs. Excess of Joy weeps". Throughout this scene Cooper maintains his hand contact on her shoulder and has a gentle smile on his face as he watches Laura's response to the vision of the angel. The camera gently pulls back from its initial close and mid shots of Laura and Cooper and rises up into the air to a similar height as that of the angel as the credits start to roll. There is no dialogue in this scene, which is played out entirely in slow motion, just melancholic sustained non-diegetic notes that segue into Luigi Cherubini's *Requiem in C Minor* as the credits play.

In this chapter I want to consider this scene in detail, to extract it from the narrative from which it comes, to suspend it, much like the way it is itself "suspended"; as a means of considering the wider ramifications of this depiction of death and a possible afterlife. In addition, I want to relate it to other scenes from the film and the television series, to seek out obtuse meanings which may or may not overlap with the other levels of signification available. To guide me in this task I will invoke the work of Walter Benjamin, amongst others, as a means of considering the sacred and the profane, together with his discussions of allegory and insights into melancholia as a means of deciphering this incipit. Benjamin's use of theological language, to provide a lay response which is non-economically determined, offers an approach which seems appropriate to the object and task in hand. This scene offers a form of redemption and catharsis for the viewer, in which as Saint Augustine (1992, p.36) wrote about tragic pity, "A member of the audience is not excited to offer help, but invited only to grieve...Tears and agonies, therefore, are objects of love". What is it in this scene that we are asked to grieve? And what does it mean to present a vision of the afterlife in which angels appear? Is this scene to be read seriously, or ironically, or even in both ways at once, and does it, therefore, offer different, possibly incompatible readings or levels of narrative and meaning

for different interpretive communities? I want to suggest that, within the narrative signified, there is another level of meaning, an excess that runs counter to that of the Symbolic and which threatens to undo its manifest meaning, and to offer counter- and anti-narrative levels of signification.

Benjamin's work also allows us to consider cinematic technology in relation to these concerns, in particular the use of slow motion throughout as a means of depicting the content. If this place is a representation of an afterlife then what does it propose the hereafter is like? Straightaway it reminds me of Francis Bacon's painting, *Seated Figure* of 1961, a portrait of Peter Lacey (Figure 9), which is perhaps not surprising given Lynch's declared admiration for Bacon's work⁴. This resemblance or correspondence may, therefore, act as a starting point for a more detailed discussion of the components of the scene.



Figure 9. Francis Bacon, *Seated Figure*, 1961. Oil on canvas 165.1 x 142.2 cm
Tate Gallery, London

Framing vision

The narrative structure of *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* presents the last seven days of Laura Palmer's life and acts as a subsequent "prequel" to the television series of *Twin Peaks*, yet by coming after the television series the film helps to create, retroactively, more of a

dream-like logic to the overall narrative structure. The feature-length film opens with the murder of Teresa Banks by Leland Palmer/BOB twelve months before, and ends with Laura's death and subsequent entry into the Red Room: a location seemingly outside time and space.

The opening of *Fire Walk with Me* really contains two "murders", one being the killing of Teresa Banks, which follows upon the first "murder" of the TV series as a television set is smashed by a sledgehammer (Figure 10). The opening visuals of the film depict deep blue moving shapes, which, as the camera slowly pulls back from its initial over-proximity to the images, are revealed to be the "snow" or static on the television screen over which the credits roll and the gentle, elegiac, Miles Davis inflected jazz of the theme music's trumpet part plays over sustained melancholic chords as soundtrack accompaniment. From these initial, abstract, protoplasmic shapes and colours the camera moves back to reveal the frame of the television set as we see and hear it being violently smashed, and then we hear off-screen Teresa's, but she sounds just like Laura, cries of "No" as the partially shown figure, but which viewers of the TV series know is Leland Palmer, then turns on her. The next shot shows a body, wrapped in plastic, in a manner similar to the way Laura will subsequently be dispatched after death, floating on a river with a caption underneath reading "Teresa Banks".

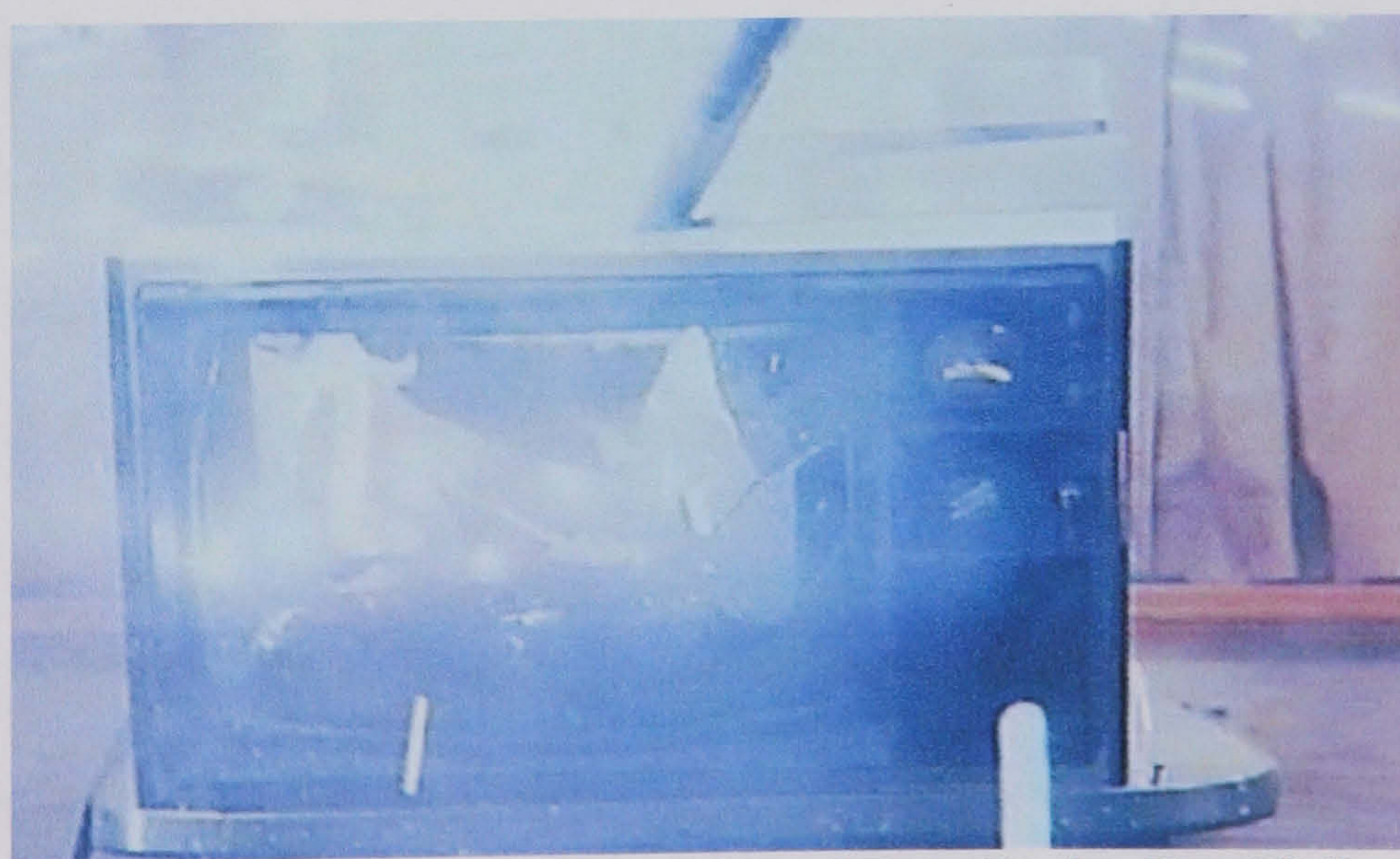


Figure 10. Smashed TV at the beginning of *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992) (Twin Peaks Online, 2005)

In this opening extract we start with pure colour, abstracted from, or rather predating, narrative, floating hypnotically over the entire screen. Slowly, as the camera pulls back to indicate the source of these images and to reveal the television frame we are introduced to narrative. These shots, therefore, initiate the change from pure cinematic signifiers to the narrative signified, yet, at the same time, they indicate that the narrative was/ is predated by the signifier; that the extra- and anti-narrative, as Julia Kristeva (1988) writes about in her essay on Giotto's use of colour in the frescoes of the Arena Chapel in Padua, are constantly in play, to supplement and disrupt any overt signifieds, as a form of excess which saturates narrative sense. Similarly, here, as in other films of Lynch, and immediately the opening shots of *Blue Velvet* (1986) come to mind, the use of saturated and strong colours provide one form of excess to disturb and disrupt the overt narrative signified.

The assault on the TV in *Fire Walk with Me* signifies the death of the television series, (to which we as viewers can now never return?) as we are taken into a slightly different cinematic Twin Peaks where the Palmer house is a different building from the one from the series, and Laura's best friend, Donna, is played by another actor. Yet these differences are uncannily familiar, the dream-like logic of the *mise-en-scène* and *mise-en-shot* are such that these disjunctions do not disturb, overmuch, as far as I can tell. It is as if we are re-entering a dream where we can never be sure of what is new and what was there before. The opening images and sounds presented to the viewer, from the initial frameless blue "snow", to the frame of the television set and beyond into the diegesis indicate that a re-framing is required from the audience's point of view to incorporate this different vision and to enter this cinematic "play".

At the end of the TV series the audience was left with the image of Cooper deliberately smashing his head into a mirror which reflected back the face of BOB, who now occupies his body, or perhaps it is the body of Cooper's doppelgänger? Within the Black Lodge there appear to be doubles of each character, and as Cooper tried to escape he was

chased by his evil twin who may have beaten him back to the exit in the woods and subsequently into the town of Twin Peaks.

As Fred Botting and Scott Wilson have pointed out:

The convention of the mirror, used throughout the series as the hackneyed trope signaling the reversal of inside and outside, appearance and reality, is given another turn: subjects are chillingly presented as no more than reflections of the mirror. As a reversal it is predictable enough in a series that continually played with generic and cultural codes. But as a double reversal, from inner depth to external surface and then from superficial image to superficial image, it is more disturbing, an index of evil: ‘the principle of evil is synonymous with the principle of reversal’ (Baudrillard 1993: 65). The reversal doubles the identification of Cooper as romance hero, the only figure holding the playful fragments of the series together, and as metaphor of romance identification, staging the duplicitous play of coded images. While the former would have offered a way to close the series as a story of good’s triumph over evil, the latter offers no exit from a play of narrative surfaces that flicker with the ambivalence of evil.

(Botting and Wilson, 2001, p.149)

And this is no doubt true in a sense, but I cling to the hope, however forlorn, that it is a doppelgänger and not Cooper who now occupies Twin Peaks. But if that is not the case then evil does appear to have won out over good. We/I can only hang on to the belief that Cooper will be able to find an exit back into the town and save us all from “the evil that men do”⁵.

And in another sense we can perhaps rethink the relationship between the initial shots of *Fire Walk with Me*. Because here the opening, abstract, signifiers of pure colour offer an escape from the “ambivalence of evil” which, paradoxically, comes into play with the appearance of the narrative signified as the screen is revealed. Therefore, inherent within the narrative structure is another form of meaning which disrupts and challenges the overt meanings presented on the levels of story and plot.

The image of Cooper with Laura in the Red Room at the end of the film, apparently outside of time and “reality” seems to speak, paradoxically, of Cooper as the personification of immanence rather than transcendence. During episode 20 of *Twin Peaks* when Jean Renault holds Cooper hostage at Dead Dog Farm he says to him:

Before you came here Twin Peaks was a simple place. My brothers deal dope to the teenagers and truck drivers. One-Eyed Jack welcome the businessman and the tourists. Then everything change. Suddenly the simple dream become a nightmare. So if you die maybe you'll be the last to die. Maybe you bring the nightmare with you and maybe the nightmare will die with you.

Nevertheless, Cooper and Laura were/are always in Twin Peaks in one form or another. Their presence, even in absence, or even more so in absence in the case of Laura, underlines the entire series and film. In the Red Room Cooper is always with Laura, and the viewer, providing catharsis from the horrors of evil as depicted on the level of narrative, so that even though the audience of the television series had been left with the threatening image of an evil Cooper, or more likely his doppelgänger in Twin Peaks, we know, or hope, that “he” really exists in the Red Room offering support and comfort to us all. Here there was no murder; Laura and the viewers are safe, protected by Special Agent Dale Cooper.

Death becomes her

In the Red Room Laura is cosseted by Cooper and the angel, one of the figures of the ridiculous sublime in Lynch's films that Slavoj Žižek (2000) asks us to take seriously, as emanations of the Lacanian Real: that which underscores our existence but which manifests itself in strange, traumatic or unexpected ways, outside and incapable of being represented symbolically.

The entire narrative of *Twin Peaks*, the TV series, and *Fire Walk with Me*, talks about and insistently returns to the death of Laura Palmer. For Lynch as director this was something he felt drawn to return to in making the prequel after the series was terminated. This in itself might seem perverse. After all the series had been stopped by the television company, audiences were diminishing, and who would be the audience for a prequel? Well, I would, obviously, and other viewers who stayed with the series. But there is a deeper imperative at work here. The need or rather desire to go back, for director and spectators alike, indicates that

the mourning period had not ended, and as Freud showed us, melancholia is failed mourning. As viewers we may think that we are still mourning the loss of Laura, or else, melancholically, we may think that this is our loss but it is something else, something of which we are not fully aware – the loss of ourselves brought into being by the extra- and anti-narrative signifiers which run alongside and yet disrupt the manifest narrative elements of the film. Thus the work continued in an attempt to complete the mourning that the series instigated, to seek out what it was that was lost but was not fully known.

In an essay entitled ‘Some Thoughts on Mourning and Melancholia’ Darian Leader pulls together different psychoanalytic approaches to the subject, and he considers Hanna Segal’s Kleinian approach to art and aesthetics in which “the place of art in a culture takes on a new sense: a set of instruments to help us to mourn” (Leader, 2004, p.19). And, in relation to melancholia, where there is a blockage which prevents thing presentations becoming word presentations, he suggests that one of the functions of poetry (and I would argue, film,) is to “allow the subject to find signifiers to index the impossibility of a passage from word to thing representations, from one representational system to another” (Leader, 2004, p.34). Linking this to a Lacanian perspective, Leader (2004, p.29) then demonstrates how the preconditions of mourning are the rites of mourning. And as he points out, Freud’s *Mourning and Melancholia* was written during the First World War, when rites of mourning were becoming intensely private affairs given the vast scale of deaths and the need to bury the bodies quickly, in contrast to classical and pre-modern societies where mourning involved formalized public displays of grief. He concludes his essay by quoting “our lost colleague and friend Elizabeth Wright [who] observed, melancholic subjects ‘require the poetic to deliver them’” (Leader, 2004, p.34). And, perhaps this is what is happening in this final scene of *Fire Walk with Me* where cinema provides a darkened public space for the outpouring of secular grief. This may, in part, explain why viewers tend to cry more in the darkness of the cinema auditorium than in front of paintings.

If, as many critics argued, Lynch's work is all about empty postmodern play then there would be little point in going back to *Twin Peaks*, because it had been "played" out. However, by doing so, the film presents an opportunity to extend our mourning period and mourning-play. And there is a sense in which this circularity in thought and object continues beyond the film. As the narrative leaves us in this peculiar place, our ability, if we so choose, to go on thinking about these matters is left unfettered, unlike linear narratives where our dreaming is brought to an abrupt end by distinct narrative closure. Now we know that Cooper is already in the Red Room so, perhaps, this time, he can undo what has already been done? But can we ever really go back now that the television set is smashed? Has that event in effect put us in the same position as Cooper and his doppelgänger? And how did we all get here in the first place?

The poetics of plastic

Let me respond to some of my own questions by mapping out some of the visual and aural routes that brought us here. So I want to rewind a little, or perhaps in these days of DVDs I should say go back to another scene chapter. I want to think about the events leading up to and beyond Laura's murder. If you have seen the film you will remember that she and Ronette Pulaski joined Jacques Renault and Leo Johnson at a cabin in the woods to drink, take drugs and have sex. Laura was bound with her arms behind her back, and found that way by her father who knocked out Jacques while Leo drove off leaving Laura and Ronette to their fate as Leland takes the two girls to the disused railway carriage. Here the obsolescent remnants of industry come to act as the site of murder – where nature's ruination is compounded by the brutal killing of this sexually abused girl.

Inside the carriage, as Laura sees BOB/her father alternating in appearance, Ronette is shown praying, which results in her seeing a vision of an angel and then her ropes magically untie. As she subsequently tries to escape Leland knocks her out and pushes her outside the

carriage. At that point Laura puts on the ring which had rolled into the circle of light, an act which confirms her imminent death as Leland cries out “Don’t make me do this” before he stabs her violently to the strains of *Requiem in C Minor*, which is then reprised in the final scene, and we are offered “beautiful” shots of Laura’s face, upside down and bloody: an aesthetics of murder with resemblances to the way Dorothy’s face is shot in *Blue Velvet* after she is hit by Frank Booth and, later, by Jeffrey. Just after Laura is killed there are shots from the position her body occupies on the floor of the disused railway carriage, as her father/BOB places a plastic sheet over her. In these shots the spectator is put into Laura’s place and, essentially, then transported with her to the Red Room. The spectator is sutured⁶ between the diegetic world of the film and the spectatorial position of distance and desire. The gap between time and space is thereby effaced by these shots. Then Leland is shown carrying her dead body, encased in plastic to float it on the river in a similar manner to the way Teresa Bank’s body had been deposited twelve months before. Slightly later on we see the shot of Laura’s face as it was revealed in the pilot episode. However, in this case, the actions are depicted in slow motion, as are the subsequent events in the Red Room. In these shots the distance between character, action and spectatorship is reduced to a minimum: the play of mourning is slowed down to emphasize the sorrowful nature of these events and to extend their affectivity.

What can be said about the use of plastic? In *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes (1993, p.98) writes about its prosaic quality which turns out to be a triumphant reason for its existence as, for the first time, “artifice aims at something common not rare”. He also refers to its acoustic dimension: “But what best reveals it for what it is is the sound it gives, at once hollow and flat; its noise is its undoing” (Barthes, 1993, p.98). And that “flat” sound accompanies the shots of the plastic sheeting lowered over the dead body of Laura, but from a position the spectator watches while alive but, at the same time, being reminded of death. The spectator sees what Laura cannot see, and hears what Laura cannot hear; that is the sight and

sound of the partially translucent sheet being lowered over the body. As an artificial substance plastic's use is as a container to keep things fresh; as a means of encasing a dead body it, at the same time, seeks to deny that death. For plastic's use is to safeguard its contents, and, coupled with the dead, women's bodies which are wrapped in this ubiquitous, prosaic, substance; the text presents a poetics of plastic. Plastic encases and keeps at bay that which, paradoxically, it seeks to represents: death.

So, in a sense, plastic acts literally and prosaically, while, at the same time, it is also the poetic container for keeping death at bay. The substance, which, as Barthes has pointed out is the first to acknowledge its ordinariness, comes to act as the container which signifies the ambivalence inherent in the representation of Laura Palmer's death. Plastic takes on its alchemical quality in which it is transubstantiated into something other, or, in this case, its contents are turned into a substance that refuses death, and it becomes another trope in the plastic arts of depicting the aesthetic excess of feminine death and its obtuse meaning.

Death becomes her, again



Figure 11. Dead Laura, *Twin Peaks* (Twin Peaks Online, 2005)

Elisabeth Bronfen, in her discussion of Edgar Allan Poe's famous aphorism that "the death of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world", points out that we

need to take Poe's poetics seriously to understand how the representation of the conjunction of a dead, beautiful, woman is *the* most poetical topic by reference to the excess in the superlative. Poe's treatise on poetics in his essay 'The Philosophy of Composition' argues that all works should begin at the end, and as Bronfen (1992, p.61) states: "Death is, then, from the start integral to his notion of poetics, since the incidents described, the tone used to describe them, each draw their poetic power and their legitimacy from a predetermined, inevitable return to the inanimate".

In a similar manner the television series *Twin Peaks* begins with the discovery of Laura Palmer's body, and the subsequent film ends with Laura resurrected in the Lodge. Death is thus used as the effect or affect with which to guide the actions of the narrative and the spectator's response. The connection between Poe's poetics and Lynch's thus provides for a means of understanding the ways in which these works address their audiences aesthetically and historically.

As Bronfen goes on to argue:

to speak about representing 'feminine death as the most poetical topic' means speaking of an aesthetic moment of excess. It is a superlative theme because it marks the moment where a text turns back to itself, where it undoes its own premise, where it discloses what it sets out to obscure - a hypertropic moment.

(Bronfen, 1992, p. 62)

She suggests that Western culture maintains an ambivalent attitude to death in that two opposite meanings are kept in play at the same time, so that: "Pleasure at the beauty of Woman resides in the uncanny *simultaneity* of recognizing and misrecognising it as a veil for death" (Bronfen, 1992, p.63). Therefore, it is only logical that "for Poe beauty should find its supreme manifestation in the melancholic tone", and, citing Sarah Kofman she goes on to say, "Because it is created on the basis of the same elusiveness it tries to obliterate, what art in fact does is mourn beauty, and in so doing mourns itself" (Bronfen, 1992, p.64).

In *Twin Peaks* these two ambivalent attitudes are kept in play overall: the narrative presents Laura Palmer's death, but at the same time, she is kept alive, or resurrected, in the Red Room. The hope, however forlorn, remains in suspense that beauty and death are in a Möbius-like structure where one is not allowed to submerge the other. The complex aesthetic workings of the texts keep beauty and Woman suspended forever in the melancholic trace of the photographic index and a narrative which seeks to depict death and yet simultaneously keep the bodies alive aesthetically.

So, returning to the final scenes from *Fire Walk With Me*, we note that within the Red Room following the murder, Leland had only progressed as far as the first chamber to be with BOB, Mike and the Man from Another Place; whereas Laura goes beyond the entrance room into a room of possible redemption. We know that these are separate rooms even though the furnishings are the same because the floor pattern runs in different directions; the pattern in Laura and Cooper's room is at ninety degrees to that in the room Leland enters, and through which Laura's spirit glides over. In this room Laura is united with Cooper and the final shots are played out in this mourning-play. We are presented with a contemporary, postmodern, account of mourning and melancholia, and here it is important, I believe, to extend our discussion to reflect upon a much wider historical perspective, to invoke Walter Benjamin's work on tragedy as a means of considering how this incipit might relate to classical tragedy and the baroque mourning-play, for reasons that I hope will become clearer below.

In his introduction to Walter Benjamin's *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, George Steiner makes the point that the seventeenth century baroque mourning-play, for Benjamin, marks a distinct shift from classical tragedy in that: "The *Trauerspiel* is counter-transcendental; it celebrates the immanence of existence even where this immanence is in turmoil...Behind this fusion stands the *exemplum* of Christ's kingship and crucifixion" (Steiner, 2003, pp.16-17). Whilst classical tragedy is linked to myth, the baroque mourning-play is grounded in history. And for Benjamin "Baroque drama is inherently-allegoric, as

Greek tragedy never is, precisely because it postulates the dual presence, the twofold organizing pivot of Christ's nature – part god, part man, and overwhelmingly of this world” (Benjamin, 2003, p.17). Furthermore, Steiner goes on to state that:

The *Ursprung* closes with an almost mystically-intense apprehension of the ubiquity of evil in baroque sensibility. It suggests, in a vein which is unmistakably personal, that only allegory, in that it makes substance totally significant, totally representative of ulterior meaning and, therefore, ‘unreal’ in itself, can render bearable an authentic perception of the infernal.

(Steiner, 1977, p.20)

There is, I think, a sense in which this is true of the depictions of evil and death in *Twin Peaks*. The allegorical representation of such matters is perhaps the only way open to us, to depict and “speak” about the issues raised in *Twin Peaks*. In a supposedly secular society some of us might laugh about the visions of angels, but have we truly surmounted our ability to do without any support? Here, I would argue, Lynch's film offers the possibility of a new allegorical form for a post-psychoanalytic condition for a contemporary cinematic audience. It is by reconsidering what these scenes from *Fire Walk with Me* offer us in relation to previous critical responses that the relevance and importance of this postmodern allegorical structure can be understood in relation to its precursors.

Benjamin sought to clear the distinction between Greek tragedy and baroque mourning-plays not for esoteric reasons, but because there was a contemporary pertinence to his analysis in relation to German Expressionism and the rise of Nazism. In a similar manner, the reasons for invoking Benjamin's work here is to elucidate how Lynch's film(s) relate to contemporary concerns around representation and postmodernity. In many readings of the work (see the Introduction) much is made of the postmodern play in the films and the use of intertextuality, while at the same time, many of these commentators bemoan the conservative outlook or content of the work. However, if we read these works (or parts of them), and in

this case, *Twin Peaks* and subsequent film *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me*, allegorically, then this opens up a richer and more substantive range of analyses, which may help us bypass the binary oppositions put forward between form and content towards a possible contemporary sensibility⁷. For Benjamin allegory of the mourning-play was very different from the use of symbol:

The measure of time for the experience of the symbol is the mystical instant in which the symbol assumes the meaning into its hidden and, if one might say so, wooded interior. On the other hand, allegory is not free from a corresponding dialectic, and the contemplative calm with which it immerses itself into the depths which separate visual being from meaning, has none of the disinterested self-sufficiency which is present in the apparently related intention of the sign.

(Benjamin, 2003, pp.165-166)

The two forms of drama call for different responses from the spectator. In tragedy, Benjamin tells us, the spectator is like the hero, self-enclosed. However in the *Trauerspiel*, the very name “already indicates that its context awakens mourning in the spectator...For these are not so much plays which cause mourning, as plays through which mournfulness finds satisfaction: plays for the mournful” (Benjamin, 2003, p.118-119). Indeed *Trauer* “signifies sorrow, lament, the ceremonies and memorabilia of grief. Lament and ceremonial demand audience” (Benjamin, 2003, p.17). In *Fire Walk with Me* the spectator is brought back to the origin of the events depicted in the television series, to lament and grieve. Some viewers may have started from a knowing position, but, if they stayed with the narrative until the end, the initial waning of affect (to use Jameson’s phrase) may have resulted in a resurrection of affect for the spectator, in a similar manner to the philosophical/theological-allegorical resurrection and redemption of Laura.

In terms of an analysis of the mourning-plays Benjamin states that:

For a critical understanding of the *Trauerspiel*, in its extreme, allegorical form, is possible only from the higher domain of theology; so long as the approach is an aesthetic one, paradox must have the last word. Such a resolution, like the resolution

of anything profane into the sacred, can only be accomplished historically, in terms of a theology of history, and only dynamically, not statically in the sense of a guaranteed economics of salvation.

(Benjamin, 2003, p.216)

Similarly, in the diegetic world of *Twin Peaks* the notion of feminine beauty is exposed, abused and killed, but in the Red Room there is a space for reflection upon the philosophical parameters of our ability to comprehend and represent such issues. As Howard Caygill points out, in respect of Benjamin's discussion about the representation of death in the Mourning-Play:

This death did not complete a life, give it meaning, but cut it off and left it in question. There is no final decision which would give it meaning to the events which preceded it, simply decision and accident in the face of catastrophe.

(Caygill, 2000, p.19)

Likewise, in *Twin Peaks* the spectator is left with a series of unanswered questions, but with the support of saintly Cooper, there is hope via catharsis, in this space outside of time and the restrictions of language.

Dreaming a kiss of death



Figure 12. Cooper's dream, *Twin Peaks*, episode 2 (Twin Peaks Online)

What then can be made of the cinematic and televisual dream of *Twin Peaks*? The Red Room, it will be remembered, was also the site of Cooper's dream in episode 2 (Figure 12), when he first learned, and then forgot, the identity of Laura's murderer. He now returns to it, but in chronological order the final events of *Fire Walk with Me* predate Cooper's arrival in the town of Twin Peaks. But we know that he is already there, that he is immanent in the structure and form of the events, both those previously depicted, and those about to be depicted.

In this still of the Red Room from Cooper's dream the differences in the representation of Laura and the naked *Venus Pudica* statue are clear and apparent. In his dream, which is shot entirely in reverse as is the dialogue, Cooper, twenty five years older, visits the Red Room and meets a woman who looks just like Laura but whom the Man from Another Place refers to as his cousin. She rises from her chair and walking over to Cooper kisses him and whispers in his ear the name of her murderer (Figure 13). Cooper then wakes in his room at the Great Northern Hotel and phones Sheriff Truman to tell him that he knows the killer's identity which he will reveal the next morning at breakfast. By the next morning, however, he has forgotten the name, but tells Truman and Lucy that the case will be easy to solve because: "break the code: solve the crime". Of course, things are not so simple – what would be the pleasure in the case being resolved so quickly? Here, desire is maintained via the open ended narrative.



Figure 13. *Twin Peaks*, episode 2 (Twin Peaks Online, 2005)

If we then contrast this dream to the start of the detective narrative in *Fire Walk with Me* we have a different level of meaning offered in respect of the Dancing 'Lil scene. Here Agent Chet Desmond is introduced to Gordon Cole's "present" as Dancing 'Lil acts out the subsequent narrative. Immediately afterwards in the car Desmond explains to Agent Stanley the meanings of the strange dance. Cole's introduction of her as "She's my mother's sister's girl" means that this is a federal case. 'Lil's sour face (see Figure 14) means that there will be problems with the local authorities who will not be receptive to the FBI. Both eyes blinking mean that there will be trouble up ahead. Her hand in her pocket means that the local police are hiding something. Her other clenched fist means that the local police will be belligerent. Stanley responds to Desmond's question about the dress being altered as being a reference to this being a drugs case. But the one thing he will not discuss is the meaning of the blue rose, or rather that he is not permitted to say what it means. This is the only bit of narrative which is unexplained. The rest has been given to the audience from the outset. Therefore, in a sense there is nothing, or very little to find out. All the clues have been given in advance. The reference to a blue rose case itself is never fully revealed other than it being the latest in an apparently unconnected series of murders. And again it acts as an enigmatic riddle that lies alongside and in excess of the narrative. The strange blue rose is on one level a surrealist touch in Lynch's work that many critics allude to. At the same time, its colour, as Kristeva (1988, p. 41) points out, is the sublimated *jouissance* which finds its basis in the forbidden mother next to the Name-of-the-Father, and which bypasses and exceeds normative meaning.



Figure 14. *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992) (Twin Peaks Online, 2005)

We have, therefore, different levels of signification and possible readings in these scenes. The Dancing ‘Lil scene offers us signs, the meanings of which are revealed in advance, and which displays the narrative knowledge that the TV series brings to the film: for we know who killed Laura – that narrative trajectory has been played out. The Red Room scenes however, offer different levels of signification where allegory and other levels of meaning or knowledge can come to the fore, whereas ‘Lil’s dance of signs does not. If we now return to the Red Room at the end of *Fire Walk with Me* what else can we find there?

Saturn

Apart from Cooper and Laura what else is there in the room? On a side table beside Laura stands a small lamp in the shape of Saturn. What is to be made of this? Is its positioning here accidental, a chance event amongst the choices of lamp that could have been used, a piece of postmodern kitsch?

In his analysis of the preservation of the Hellenic sciences by Arabian scholars Walter Benjamin (2003, p.148) remarks upon the influence of Saturn in the conception of melancholy, “The theory of melancholy has a very close connection with the doctrine of stellar influences. And of such influences the most baleful, that of Saturn, could rule over the melancholy disposition”. Saturn, thus, presents a dialectical trait which links it with the Greek

conception of melancholy in which there is a spirit of contradiction present in that Saturn relates to sloth and dullness, while, at the same time, endowing the soul with the powers of intelligence and contemplation (Benjamin, 1998, p.149). The dialectic of Saturn, Benjamin tells us, is to be found in the inner mythological structure of Cronos (The Greek name for Saturn). For Cronos was a god of extremes; he is both ruler of the golden age and a mournful, dethroned god. Max Pensky notes, in relation to the Warburg Institute's work on Renaissance melancholia and its importance for Benjamin's theory of baroque melancholia, that:

Like a gateway emotion, melancholy mournfulness signals the passage of the contemplative mind to its transcendent home. Rather than dissipating with this spiritual ascent, sadness is intensified, urging the mind on to ever-higher levels of contemplation, a progressive deepening of speculation.

(Pensky, 1993: 99)

The interconnections between stellar influences and the melancholic disposition are thereby linked in *Fire Walk with Me* in a manner that insists that we contemplate the objects in the room in great detail, that parts of their meanings might have been forgotten, but that they contain a detailed history of connotations that outstrip the work to which they now relate, to incorporate the past, present and future in their current depiction.

'What a beauty. Kinda reminds me of that statue. The babe without the arms.' - Gordon Cole to Agent Cooper about Shelly Johnson (*Twin Peaks*, episode 20).

Gordon Cole is obviously referring to the *Venus de Milo* figure here. And in the final episode of *Twin Peaks* there is indeed a *Venus de Milo* statue which occupies a position at the end of the corridor between the rooms of the Black Lodge as Cooper tries to make his escape in which he comes across various characters and their doubles. Similarly, in *Lost Highway*, a Venus figure takes on significance at a crucial part of the diegesis. This is at the beginning of the dissolution of Fred Madison's fantasy projection as Pete Drayton, just after he kills Andy

and Alice says to him “*you* killed him”, thereby reminding him of his earlier murder of Renee which he has sought to distance himself from. Pete’s nose starts to bleed and he asks for directions to the bathroom. As he goes up the stairs he passes, on the half-landing, a semi-nude Venus statue. As in the Red Room, this figure confronts Pete as *the* image of femininity which contrasts with the lived body of experience and as fantasmatic projections which the women in Lynch’s films live out or have lived out upon them. In *Lost Highway*, at this point, a pornographic film depicting Alice being fucked from behind is projected on a large screen in the living room of Andy’s house, under which Alice is seen as the archetypal *femme fatale*, dressed in her underclothes and holding a gun with which she “playfully” threatens Pete, coolly preparing to leave the building while Andy lies dead, his head, horribly yet comically, encased in a glass coffee table.

So while Gordon Cole is specifically referring to the *Venus de Milo* figure I want to now talk about the *Venus Pudica* statue in the Red Room. It is also no accident, or if it is, it is a fortuitous one, that this statue is placed here alongside the other objects in the room. The statue stands directly behind the Man from Another Place (Figure 15) and sets up a binary opposition along the lines of sexual difference⁸. As depictions of idealized female beauty these images of women have haunted Western philosophy and aesthetics for centuries. Indeed, the attributes of these idealized and chaste figures are ones against which the events of Laura’s life and death can be inversely measured. She is abused by her father/BOB, finds “solace” at the hands of many other men, and is subsequently murdered by her father/BOB. In both the stills we have looked at, Laura is seated and clothed in a black, velvet cocktail dress, which has a split revealing her legs. Her hair cascades around her shoulders. In contrast the hair on the statue is depicted pinned on the head and the pose conceals and simultaneously draws attention to the statue’s breasts and pubis.

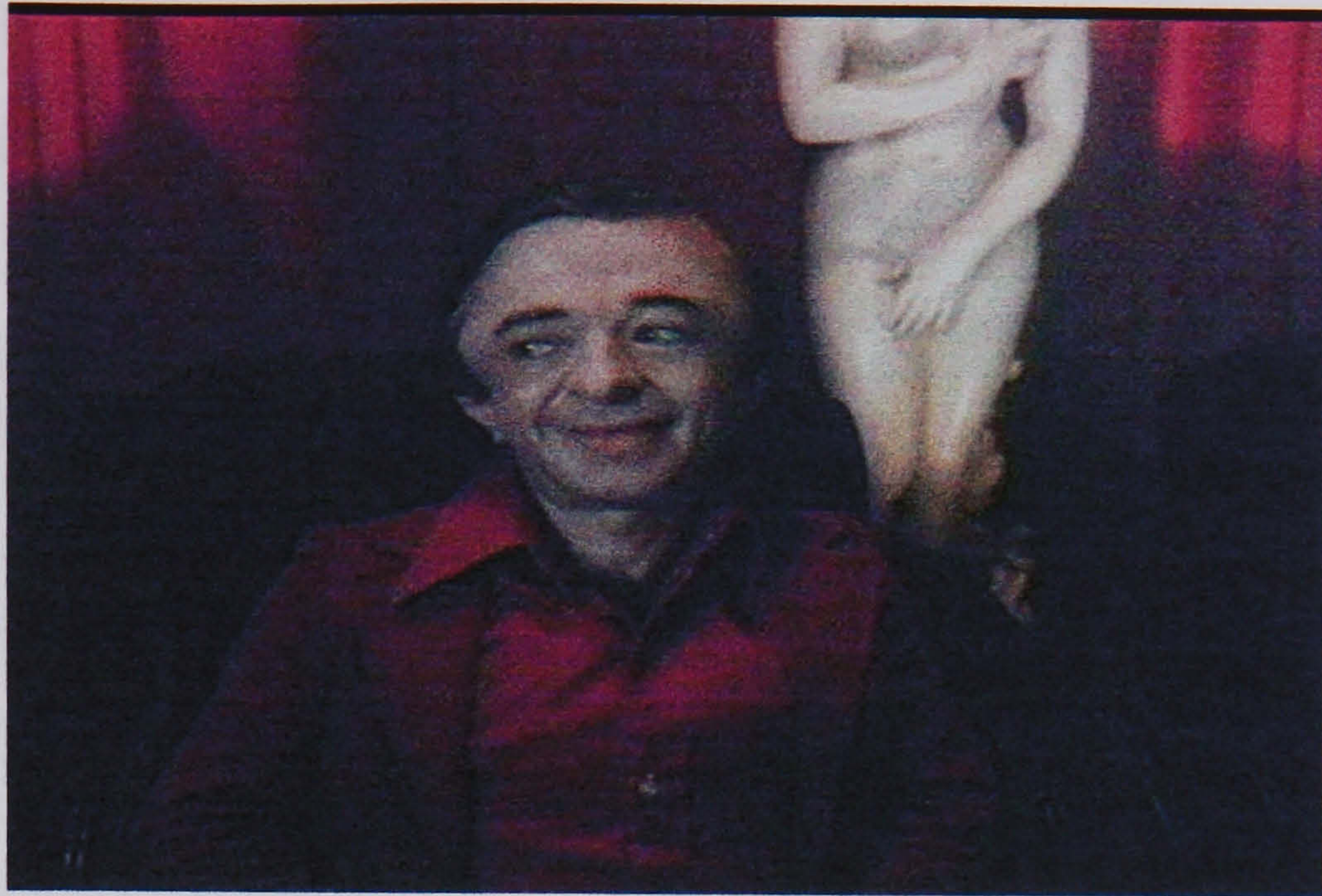


Figure 15. The Man from Another Place, *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992)
(Twin Peaks Online, 2005)

For Walter Benjamin, “An ancient statue of Venus, for example, stood in a different traditional context with the Greeks, who made it an object of veneration, than the clerics of the Middle Ages, who viewed it as an ominous idol” (Caygill, 2000, p.23). What then of the figure of Venus in this TV series and film? Does it, thanks to mechanical reproducibility, lose its aura? Or does its usage speak about the contiguity between notions of femininity still current in Western philosophy and aesthetics? As a perfect example of the closed, petrified, female body the relationship between the depiction of Laura’s plight and the limits of representation seem to speak of more than the ridiculous sublime: perhaps of the limits of the sublime?

The *Venus Pudica* statue, being fixed and frozen, thereby acts as a counterweight to the figure of Laura and her relationship to death. From marble, quarried out of the ground to be sculpted into sublime yet fixed forms, to plastic, that most ubiquitous yet alchemical material; we run the gamut from the ancients to the postmodern in the representation and framing of femininity. Yet the links between these periods are brought closely into focus in these few images from *Fire Walk with Me*. Millennia are captured in this one location where the continuities and disruptions of history can be seen side by side. These cheap reproductions

of Venus and the Saturn lamp give us beauty as a counterpoint to melancholia via these kitschy reproductions of semes which haunt Western culture.

'Angel came down from Heaven yesterday. Stayed with me long enough to rescue me.'
(*'Angel'*, Jimmy Hendrix)

Also with Laura and Cooper is the figure of the angel which hovers above them. Martha Nochimson read Lynch extracts from Luce Irigaray's essay 'Sexual Difference' at their meeting when she was preparing her book *The Passion of David Lynch*. For Irigaray, the figures of angels act as (figurative?) mediators in the potentiality of a new *poetics* of sexual difference. As Irigaray (1991, p.166) puts it: "In order to live and think through this difference, we must reconsider the whole question of *space* and *time*". In her analysis the gods or God created space and, with it, time, whereas "Desire occupies or designates the place of the *interval*. A permanent definition of desire would put an end to desire" (Irigaray, 1991, p.166).

As such angels act:

As mediators of what has not yet taken place, or what is heralded, angels circulate between God, who is the perfectly immobile act, man, who is enclosed within the horizons of his world of work, and woman, whose job it is to look after nature and procreation...The angel is whatever *passes through the envelope or envelopes* from one end to the other, postponing every deadline, revising every decision, undoing the very idea of repetition. They destroy the monstrous elements that might prohibit the possibility of a new age, and herald a new birth, a new dawn.

(Irigaray, 1999, p.173)

She goes on to say, "We need both space and time. And perhaps we are living in an age when *time must redeploy space*. Immanence and transcendence are being recast, notably by that *threshold* which has never been examined in itself. It is a threshold unto *mucosity*" (Irigaray, 1991, p.175). And in this scene from *Fire Walk with Me* Cooper stands almost totally motionless as he touches Laura's shoulder, unlike the kinetically-captured athletic poses of

classical male statues he is silent and immobile throughout this final scene – an allegorical figure who is incapable of stopping what has been done on the overt level of narrative, but who can offer solace on the other levels of the extra- and anti-narrative.

I do not want to suggest, however, that *Twin Peaks* takes on and proposes answers for the questions and issues put forward by Irigaray, only that, as a text, it returns again and again to the same questions/problems without being able to suggest a way out of the intractable problematics of representation, sexual difference and other levels of meaning. And further, that this circularity and insistence upon returning to its original object is itself searching, revealing and culturally important.

Slow motion and mourning

In addition to the foregoing discussion there are aspects of cinematic technology that require our attention in these final scenes. As Gertrud Koch points out, in her analysis of Walter Benjamin's 'Work of Art' essay,

So, too, slow motion not only presents familiar qualities of movement but reveals in them entirely unknown ones, 'which, far from looking like retarded rapid movements, give the effect of singularly gliding, floating, supernatural motions'...The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses.
(Koch, 2000, p.210)

Now this notion of an optical unconscious is a curious one, and one which Rosalind Krauss (1994, pp. 179-180) both uses and changes to think about ways in which artists, predominantly those associated with the Surrealist movement, "constructed it as the projection of the way that human vision can be thought to be less than a master of all it surveys". I would like to suggest that we can perhaps think about the use of different tenses in film as a means of considering their effects and possible affects. For this slow, gliding motion introduces us to slow-down in which temporality and affectivity are extended. Slow motion is used to linger

over the face of the dead Laura Palmer looking down on the body from above; down onto the position the spectator occupied, however briefly, a short time before. The duration of these shots was indeed brief and may not be consciously recorded in an initial viewing. Indeed, it was only when I watched the scene a number of times that I became aware of them⁹. However, the change of position, directly into Laura's post-murder "takes" the viewer into the Red Room to be comforted by Cooper, our saintly protector, but who is ultimately unable to save even himself. But he, at least, provides hope and belief for us where, otherwise, there might be none.

When the camera moves up into the air, towards the end of this scene, slow motion makes us aware of the movement of the angel which, at one point, hovers over the *Venus Pudica* statue, just beyond the frame shown in Figure 16. Slow motion allows the spectator to experience the ethereal figure of the angel, which is then superimposed over the hard, fixed shape of the statue. These shots bring together, in allegorical form, far-reaching components of Western philosophy and present the limits or traps of existing discourses on identity, sexuality and gender. We are taken, perhaps, to the threshold of our limits to rethink notions of time and space, but not, I think, to go beyond them into the mucosity that Irigaray talks about.

In her essay on Roberto Rossellini's film, *Journey to Italy* (*Viaggio in Italia*), Laura Mulvey notes that:

The aesthetic of classical Greek sculpture, later copied by the Romans, aspired to create the illusion that living movement had been frozen at a given moment. The illusion was, of course, to be ultimately transformed into reality by photography. For André Bazin, the photograph's ability to capture and freeze a moment is indicative of transcendence of time and of death itself.

(Mulvey, 2000, p.104)

In film, however, and in particular with the use of slow motion, the effect of supernatural gliding which Koch refers to, provides us with the experience of immanence in which the use of theological/allegorical devices can point to a future which is, at present, perhaps still

beyond our thoughts and understanding, or our ability to fully grasp the potentialities of becoming. The work of art can mourn beauty and, at the same time, provide an opportunity to think for us; to provide a platform for an extension of our current thinking and to experience the parameters of our existing limits.



Figure 16. Laura, Cooper and the angel, *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992) (Twin Peaks Online, 2005)

What can we make of the angel in this scene? Christine Buci-Glucksmann (1994, p.45) points out that “the Angel would allegorize that conflictual meeting-point between the ‘familiar’ everyday and the ‘uncanny’ which so intrigued Freud and defined dialectics for Benjamin”, and which seems to lie at the heart of Lynch’s film (see Chapter 6 for a more detailed discussion of the uncanny). It is also one of the figures that Jacques Lacan offers in Seminar XX as going beyond the Symbolic; as offering another form of *jouissance* which is not caught up in the phallic register. In a reading of this seminar, Suzanne Barnard (2002, p.183) suggests that “the angel is not simply real or symbolic but a form of undead or ‘not not being’ that serves as a figure of the possibility for a ‘real-izing’ of the gap between the symbolic and the real”.

Melancholy 'jouissance'

How can we bring all this together in our discussion of the cathartic, redemptive power I suggest these scenes may provide? Here I would like to consider Julia Kristeva's study of depression and melancholia, *Black Sun*, in which she remarks that:

Although intrinsic to the dichotomous categories of Western metaphysics (nature/culture, body/spirit, lowly/elevated, space/time, quantity/quality...) the imaginary world as signified sadness but also, the other way around, as nostalgic signifying jubilation over a fundamental, nutritive nonmeaning is nevertheless the very universe of the *possible*. Possibility of evil as perversion and of death as ultimate non-meaning. Furthermore, and on account of the meaning maintained during the fading away period, there is the infinite possibility of ambivalent, polyvalent resurrections.

(Kristeva, 1989, p.101)

Furthermore, she refers to Walter Benjamin's contention that it is baroque art, and in particular, the *Trauerspiel*, where melancholy tension is best achieved, and thereby:

By shifting back and forth from the *disowned meaning*, still present just the same, of the remnants of antiquity (thus, *Venus*, or the "royal crown") to the *literal meaning* that the Christian spiritualist context attributes to all things, allegory is a tenseness of meanings between their depression/depreciation and their signifying exaltation (*Venus* becomes the allegory of Christian love). It endows the lost signifier with a signifying pleasure, a resurrectional jubilation even to the stone and corpse, by asserting itself as coextensive with the subjective experience of a named melancholia – of melancholy jouissance.

(Kristeva, 1989, pp. 101-102)

For Benjamin, the study of *Trauerspiel* held much greater significance than purely esoteric academic analysis; it could shed light on the contemporary situation he found himself in. Similarly, the relationship between classical tragedy, baroque *Trauerspiel*, and Lynch's work within contemporary culture can be read through Benjamin's concerns. While Benjamin provided a detailed reading of the *Trauerspiel* from a wide range of baroque mourning-plays I have restricted my reading to a very small fragment of Lynch's output. However, this might be

the start of further work, but, in the same way that Benjamin was able to elucidate a great deal from fragments, *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* might encapsulate a great deal in respect of current aesthetic and social concerns. As George Steiner makes clear in his introduction to the work, Benjamin's book hints at a recursive theory of culture, "Thus a study of the baroque is no mere antiquarian, archival hobby: it mirrors, it anticipates and helps grasp the dark present" (Steiner, 2003, p.24).

Howard Caygill argues that:

In Benjamin the encounter of immanence and excess in the moment of origin is catastrophic – immanence or meaning in history is repeatedly shattered by excess – the act of handing over *ruins* what it hands over. The site where tradition gathers itself cannot be located in a present with its past and future; it is deferred to a future which is not ecstatic, not the future of this present; in Kafka's words, 'there is infinite hope, but not for us.

(Caygill, 2000, p.20)

In *Fire Walk with Me* we are presented with differing levels of meaning in which it is, perhaps, impossible as yet, to reconcile the differences between overt meanings on the level of narrative and the potentialities of other levels of signification, and consequently we might think of the film as a tragic failure. Yet, perhaps failure, as Beckett proposes, is the best we can hope for in that each work searches for something which continually escapes its grasp. We try again, we fail, but we fail better and we continue trying. As Tom Lutz (1999, p.22) points out in his detailed investigation of crying, "Tears of mourning signal our desire to turn back time and magically redeem our loss, as well as the bitter knowledge of the impossibility of that desire".

What is it then that we are asked to grieve in this film? It is, in part on the narrative level, the death of a beautiful girl, but it is more than this. I think it can be said that we are asked to grieve over an aesthetic structure in which the death of a beautiful girl acts as the cause of art: that art mourns beauty and acts as a veil of death via the hypertropic excess of the

representation of feminine murder. In a sense we seem trapped within this structure, while, at the same time, the figure of the angel may offer a way out into another form of *jouissance*. It is one we are asked to contemplate and act upon, but, to do so we need to awaken from our dreams. In *Twin Peaks* the questions arising out of the trauma of Laura's murder are repeatedly examined and explored, and an alternative is offered to us if we care to look closely enough. In the final outcome we come full circle, back to where we started. We are perhaps slightly the wiser, but if Kafka is right there is no hope for us. But without hope in Saintly Cooper what is there? And where do we go from here?

Reasons to be Tearful¹: Snapshots of Lynchian Excess

Who will write the history of tears? In which societies, in which periods, have we wept? Since when is it that men (and not women) no longer cry? Why was “sensibility,” at a certain moment, transformed into “sentimentality”?

Roland Barthes (2002, pp.180-181)

My initial premise is this: crying was an invention of the late eighteenth century. I offer as proof of this thesis the fact that at this precise historical moment there emerged a brand new literary form – melodrama – which was specifically designed to give people something to cry about.

Joan Copjec (2004, p.109)²

Still and moving pictures

Where to begin? Well, we may as well start where we left off in *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* with Laura Palmer and Agent Cooper in the Red Room (Figure 16). The quotation from William Blake, invoked in the previous chapter, appears to ring true as her initial excess of sorrow does indeed turn to laughter as she looks upon the *l'être-ange* [angelic] and *l'étrange* [uncanny] vision of the angel that manifests itself before her³. So perhaps we could hold these images of Laura's tears in our mind's eye as we start to reflect upon Lynch's depictions of lachrymation. There is a great deal of crying in Lynch's films and I will not attempt to read all of these scenes and sequences, but to pick out certain ones that from across the body of work that attract my repeated attention, in an attempt to understand how tears “flow” in these films and the effect/affect that these may have upon the spectator.

At the outset I will declare my position: I cry a lot. Even, or should I say in particular, the most cynically manipulated representation of mawkish sentimentality can elicit my tears. But what pleasures or unpleasures are at stake in relation to my special

tears secreted with reference to the Lynchian corpus? In framing this chapter I want to use the two epigraphs, from Barthes and Copjec cited above, as a means to consider the modern origins of tears and thus to reflect upon crying in Lynch's films in relation to debates about sensibility and sentimentality, melodrama, authenticity and inauthenticity, the modern and the postmodern. Now, when we consider the relationship between tears and sentimentality immediately we run into arguments about the words and their association with emotion and authenticity. As June Howard (2001, p.219) has remarked, in her study of American literary sentimentalism, emotion is usually regarded as "natural" while sentiment is seen as somehow inauthentic, and the term is (almost) always used in a pejorative context. However, as she goes on to say, the consequences of much recent work has been to show that this is a false distinction and that "expert ascriptions of sentimentality – like vernacular remarks – tend to mark moments when the discursive processes that construct emotion become visible...the appearance of the term marks a site where values are contested" (Howard, 2001, pp.222-223).

Seeking the point where these values became contested takes us to Joan Copjec's Lacanian argument that crying came into being in the late eighteenth century with the emergence of a new literary form, melodrama, which was specifically designed to make people cry. In her readings she refers to Peter Brooks' (1973) *The Melodramatic Imagination* but from whom she wants to draw a different set of conclusions about this new literary form which, she argues, emerges with the arrival of a new entity – the citizen – that was constructed and situated in a similarly novel type of new space – a public space. She then discusses Michael Fried's analysis of changes in painting in this period, which marked a change from "theatricality" to "absorption", and relates this to the emergence of the modern citizen who was only able to enter into this new public space at the cost of the removal of the "private kernel of his being" (Copjec, 1999, p.251)⁴. So, in Lacanian terms, the new public space is the space of the barred Other, and the new insistence on tears in

melodrama is bound up with these changes in that “The cry marked not the recognition of some similarity between citizens, but a crucial *lack* of recognition” (Copjec, 1999, p.252). So, melodrama as a new literary form gives “voice” to this new lack of recognition and is, therefore, inherently and structurally inauthentic in that, henceforth, there is a distinct shift in modern relationships with no direct emotional connection between citizens. Or, as she puts it, “In order, then, for the citizen to become countable among his fellows – to become comparable or equal to them in his right to claim his own uniqueness – something had to be discounted” (Copjec, 2004, p. 110). In addition, she goes on to argue that these changes also relate to the emergence of psychoanalysis, or, more precisely, provide the conditions for the emergence of psychoanalysis as a discourse for analyzing this new subject, cut off from, or, castrated from “his” innermost being.

In her earlier article on the subject Copjec (1994) provides an analysis of the structural differences between *film noir* and melodrama. The former, she argues, is based upon the logic of prohibition and lack, in accordance with the male scenario of castration, so that:

The social world, or space of the Other, into which the man enters is barred then, in the sense that it is always incomplete. *Not everything can be included in it*. This failure to include everything, this type of failure to say it all cannot account for melodrama, but it can account, say, for detective fiction.

(Copjec, 1994, p.4)

In contrast, the female specific structure of melodrama is based on nothing being lacking in the social order. Relating this analysis to ethics, particularly to Kant’s sublime, she seeks to rethink the concept from the woman’s position not the man’s. In melodrama, she suggests “Characters constantly find out too late – if at all – information and truths we already know” (Copjec, 1999, p.266). Therefore, as she goes on to state:

The ethical imperative calls upon the woman to respond to this inauthenticity in the symbolic, which prevents a stable, believable world from forming. Melodrama, for its part, not only exposes us to the unfoundedness of the world, it also presents a particular kind of ethical response to it. It attempts to redress the particular symbolic failure it acknowledges by making up for the lack that causes it. That is, it responds to the absence of limit by imposing *imaginary* limits. This response is not characteristic, however, of woman as such, but of a particular type of woman – the hysteric.
(Copjec, 1999, p.264).

Furthermore, “It is because something has *not* been prohibited, has *not* been excluded from melodrama that it seems to comport an excess, an unspecifiable ‘more’ that reanimates it” (Copjec, 1999, p.258). Taking an example from film which demonstrates the hysteric’s love she refers to the end of *Stella Dallas* (1937) when Stella walks away from her daughter’s wedding but she reads this scene in a different way from many commentaries in that this act is “no longer about giving something up, about maternal sacrifice, but about giving, or maternal love, about the creative act in which one gives precisely nothing” (Copjec, 2004, p.127).

In summary then, Copjec’s argument is that melodrama, a new literary form involving a new mode of free-indirect narration, and the arrival of the citizen in the public sphere, come together at a particular moment in Western history in which the public space “castrates” the individual, but that an ethical response can be found that seeks magnitude or love in the face of the barred symbolic, and further that *film noir* and melodrama are structurally dissimilar in their responses to the new spaces of modernity and postmodernity⁵.

I would like to keep this discussion on one side as we now go on to consider a different response to eighteenth-century art put forward by James Elkins (2004) in his book *Pictures & Tears: A History of People Who Have Cried in Front of Paintings*, taking as our example his remarks about Jean-Baptiste Greuze’s *A Girl with a Dead Canary* (Figure 17).



Figure 17. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *A Girl with a Dead Canary*, 1765

I call this painting Elkins's "pet hate" for it seems to encapsulate everything that he detests about eighteenth century art. Indeed his chapter on this painting is entitled 'False tears over a dead bird' so we start with an accusation of inauthenticity, that these tears present in the girl in the picture, and presumably those this painting seeks to elicit in the viewer, are somehow impure, improper and hence false.

Contrary to Diderot's praise of Greuze, Elkins finds little to please him here and fails to be absorbed by the image. His language throughout is troubled. He writes that:

The scene is familiar enough, but this painting goes too far...She does seem to be suffering, but her sadness is modeled [sic] on melodrama...The whole ensemble makes me a little queasy. It is too sentimental and too literary, and it's slyly sexual...This is more than just a picture of sadness: there's something wrong with it.
(Elkins, 2004, p.109)

According to Elkins we have lost our eighteenth century and we can no longer take paintings such as this seriously. Indeed, he seems to be perturbed by his feelings and seeks to distance himself from the "unseemly" and "unmanly" aspects of it – "After all, if you want cloying sentimentality, you can get it from romantic potboilers and Hallmark card shops" (Elkins, 2004, p.115).

In a sense I think that Elkins is both right and wrong here. Yes, it is modelled on melodrama, but whereas he seems to be unhappy about this, feeling that there is something inherently wrong with melodrama as a form of pictorial expression, it is melodrama that makes it modern in the sense that Copjec talks about. Furthermore, his assertion about it going too far may indeed be on to something, but not something that he wants to deal with as a positive attribution of the effect or possible affect of the painting. Also, I sense here a response not unlike some of those noted in the introductory chapter in relation to Lynch's films, in which the work is singled out for attention, but at the same time, the writers then seek to distance themselves from the subject matter and their responses.

Now when Elkins comes to discuss the moving image he argues that the reason people cry watching films is because the cinema is still caught up in nineteenth century notions of Romanticism and melodrama, so that "It's not that movies are time-based arts, it's that they are Romantic time arts" (Elkins, 2004, pp.143-144). Modernist fine art, in this reading, shares his mistrust of sentimentality and sought to displace it. It is somehow not what advanced art should be dealing with or not in the way that eighteenth-century artists did.

Tom Lutz, in his book *Crying: The Natural and Cultural History of Tears*, argues that:

The modernists not only criticized conventional understandings of emotion but also attempted to frustrate conventional emotional responses to their art, celebrating both emotional and aesthetic distance...[which] was in direct opposition to romantic and sentimental modes.

(Lutz, 2001. p.279)

This form of alienated distance from sentimentality, present in works such as Man Ray's *Tears* of 1932 (Figure 18), is therefore more than just an attack on the concepts of sympathy and empathy, it is caught up in an exchange of moral attitudes and values.



Figure 18. Man Ray, *Tears*, 1930 – 1933, Gelatin silver print, 9 x 11 ¾ in. 84.XM.230.2

Lutz points out how the masculinist ethos of modernism sought to distance itself from the perceived effeminate sentimentalism of mass culture and kitsch. I would argue that the sense of alienated distance is also present in melodrama, as one part of its structural effect, in a dialectic of absorption and theatricality, proximity and distance, and of the play of form and content, but from a different perspective. It is in the dialectic of emotion and the simultaneous acknowledgment of the structural *lack* in the symbolic that melodrama as a mode of address addresses (post)modernity. And it is this interconnection between different, and seemingly, incompatible forms and levels of meaning which are present in Lynch's work and perhaps give us an understanding of the complexities of these texts.

Bearing this in mind, let us now briefly return to the final scene of *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* where we are presented with an image of Laura seemingly beyond death, in a space that may echo our own haunted spaces and thoughts about the consequences of life's end, the finality of which religion and art seek to bring into play and to discuss, while holding it at bay, albeit in different ways. The theological-philosophical deconstructionist literary critic Mark C. Taylor (1990, p.80), referring to the work of Bataille and Heidegger, writes about tears as the trace of the sacred and holy, as tears as secretions and tears (rips). I do not want to

discuss tears in exactly the same way as Taylor. However, there is a sense in which the theological implications/allusions of Taylor's work and Lynch's, may provide, as Rifkin (2003, p.328) suggests in his analysis of Saint John's poetics, for a consideration of "a theological fore-life for an atheistic philosophy of the sublime".

Now Lynch and the sublime are often mentioned in conjunction with each other; as suitable bed-fellows. Indeed, a conference entitled 'The Cinematic Sublime in the Work of David Lynch' was held in February 2004 at the University of Warwick. And the sublime may offer a way of reading the films which connects with other discussions of this concept in contemporary critical discourse without having to accept theological meanings of the work. Allegory and the sublime, or perhaps that should read, sublime allegory, allows us/me to think about these works in other ways, ways that may run counter to the perceived unity of the texts. But, this is to imply that unity is the driving force of the films, as it has often been discussed in relation to classical Hollywood narratives, where excess "works" as a supplement to the main narrative thrust of these films. Whereas, in Lynch's work, excess is immanent throughout, it cannot be extracted or analysed as a separate component of these films' structure or style.

Moving images

Leaving Laura and Cooper again with the angel in the melancholic sublime of the Red Room let us move on to some other examples of tears in Lynch's films. *The Elephant Man* (1980) is a melodrama, or rather, it is a film which presents the life of "The Elephant Man", Joseph (although referred to as John in the film) Merrick in melodramatic terms. In any case, at several places in the film, and others of Lynch's, I never fail to cry. Reviewers have pointed out the atypical nature of this film in Lynch's *oeuvre*, or at least it was considered atypical until *The Straight Story* of 1999. Coming immediately after *Eraserhead* in Lynch's chronology it appeared as a "sweet", not to say, sentimental tale of the horrors and kindnesses experienced by the kind, intelligent, but severely disfigured, Merrick.

Like most of Lynch's films, *The Elephant Man* elicits strong reactions either positive or negative. Central to many reviews are discussions about the relationship between Merrick and his doctor, Frederick Treves, and Mrs. Kendall, the actress, who shows Merrick a world of beauty and artifice in the theatre away from the horrors of everyday reality. In particular, Merrick's visit to the theatre towards the end of the film is often singled out for comment, the night he then decides to sleep as ordinary "normal" people do, and in effect commits suicide by removing his pillows which provide the necessary support for the weight of his head.

However, I want to focus on another short sequence, which has not been singled out for much critical attention from earlier in the film where Merrick joins Treves at the latter's house for tea. The scene starts with a number of shots of thick, black, smoke billowing out of tall industrial chimneys, and then we are shown the boiler house that provides the energy for this "world". Immediately after these shots we cut to the serene interior of John Merrick's rooms in the hospital where the senior nurse is organizing two junior nurses to prepare Merrick for his outing. Throughout this scene we can hear the ominous, low thumping sounds of industry, thereby linking the more genteel surroundings Merrick now finds himself in, with the omnipresent threat that the industrial sounds generate both within the diegesis, and, I would argue, in the spectator. The constant reminders of the potential horrors of industry, and hence of the outside world, were made apparent in the early stages of the film when Frederick Treves is shown operating on a man who has been severely injured by industrial machinery. So throughout the film the dialectical contrast between the "natural" disfigurement of Merrick and the potential for industrial "disfigurement" is shown side by side, in contrast to the bourgeois splendour that Merrick is to be taken to in the form of Treves' Victorian domestic sanctuary. After the nurses have left the room Treves is shown entering and asks if Merrick is ready. The shot then gently dissolves to the interior hallway of Treves' house. The use of the dissolve thereby bypasses a journey through the jarring, industrial images we had previously been shown and "transports" Merrick from one place of potential safety to another. This use of

edit provides an interesting contrast with earlier shots of Merrick leaving the hospital where he is seen by Treves looking down from a great height as Merrick steps in to a horse drawn coach. In these shots (which, incidentally, remind me of the point of view shot in the black and white world of a *noir* detective looking on to the mean streets of the city below) Treves is unable to provide safety for Merrick and can only look on from afar, but he hopes he has been able to do so by securing permanent residency for him in the hospital. Of course, Treves is not able to do this, since he has no control over the night time events when he has returned to the sanctuary of his domestic sphere and the night-porter can take over access to Merrick. In the secure daylight Merrick can be protected, whereas, at nightfall, when the main staff leave, Merrick is at the mercy of the porter who treats him as a circus freak to be shown off, again, to paying customers (Figure 19).



Figure 19. (Bergen Filmklubb, 2005)

Returning now to Merrick's outing to the Treves', he is transported by the dissolve into the splendour of an elaborate Victorian bourgeois interior, replete with a vast array of chattels: furniture, decorations, pictures and photographs. The camera gives us Merrick's point of view as it pans around the room seeking to take in the wealth of detail. Following his entry

into the home there is a straight cut to Mrs. Treves descending the stairs, prior to being introduced to her guest. As she enters the sitting room she is firstly presented with Merrick's back, and as he then turns to face her, she sees his face for the first time. But, unlike other, usually lower class characters such as the junior nurses, she does not flinch. Instead she holds out her right hand to shake Merrick's. The low angle camera position from where the spectator views the shot is close to the side of Merrick from where we know that he is unable to offer his disfigured right hand in accordance with etiquette; instead he has to offer his left and we are made acutely aware of his physical disabilities and the world of manners to which he desperately wants to conform. Anne Treves then says she is pleased to meet him, and as he tries to respond by saying he is pleased to meet her he is unable to finish his sentence as he breaks down in tears because, as he says, he is not used to be treated so kindly by a beautiful woman.

Frederick Treves then offers to show Merrick around the house as Anne makes tea to give Merrick time to recover. The next shot of Anne Treves' face shows her sadness and empathy for her guest. Time is then brought forward by an ellipsis via the use of another dissolve, which brings us back into the sitting room later on as they take tea. At this point Merrick takes an interest in the photographs displayed on the mantelpiece, and he is shown, upon request, the two photographs of the Treves' children. Upon asked where they are Frederick replies that they are out with friends. Anne and Frederick look at each other before Frederick responds, and we, the audiences are complicit in this evasion, because we know or guess that the children have been removed from the domestic sphere to save them any distress and to ensure that they are not made uneasy by the sight of the guest. John Merrick then asks if Frederick and Anne would like to see a photograph of his mother, at which there is a look of surprise between the two of them before they declare that, indeed, they would like to see it. Upon being presented with the small photograph that Merrick takes from his inner coat pocket, Anne declares "Oh, but she's...Mr. Merrick, she beautiful", to which Merrick replies

“She had the face of an angel.” He then adds “I must have been a great disappointment to her”, to which Anne replies “No Mr. Merrick, no son as kind as you could ever be a disappointment to a mother”, and then he says “If only I could find her and she could see me with such lovely friends. Perhaps she could love me as I am. I try so hard to be good”. Both Merrick and Anne Treves have tears in their eyes and Anne has to turn away, for has she not imagined him as her own son? Have not her feelings of sympathy for him put her in the place of imagining him as her own offspring. At the same time there is also a sense of this scene being capable of being read as an allegory of a gay “coming out” scene.⁶

In melodrama we know we are being set up to cry but that does not dissipate the pleasure in releasing our tears, indeed it increases it. Steve Neale, in a classic account of cinematic melodrama and tears, points out there are two typical characteristics of melodrama’s mode of narration. The first is in relation to the way in which narrative events are ordered and motivated in that “there is an *excess* of effect over cause” (Neale, 1986, p.7). It is a case of too much response, which is incommensurate with the apparent cause, but this then raises interesting points about cause and effect in relation to what Copjec argues above. Indeed, I would argue that the whole of Lynch’s output can be considered as consisting of a incommensurable disconnection between cause and effect throughout the films, which results in shock, laughter or horror, depending upon the circumstances. It is, partly, this disproportionate response which provides the cinematic excess in all of these films.

As Neale (1986, p.7) also points out this power is shared to some degree by the spectator who “often *knows more*” than the main characters. He goes on to modify the literary critic Franco Moretti’s thesis that moving moments in stories are created when “the point of view of one of the characters comes to coincide with the point of view of the reader as established by the narrative” (Neale, 1985, p.7), by stating that “Time in general and the timing of coincidence is always too late (though it may be, of course), but rather it is always *delayed*” (Neale 1986, p.11). For Moretti the rhetorical device of “agnition”, which retracts

and re-establishes point of view is a ‘moving’ device when it comes **too late**” (Quoted in Neale, 1986, p.8, emphasis in the original). For Neale, this device is moving because it is always delayed.

The technical devices Neale (1986, p.9) refers to as important in establishing the spectator’s position, and hence, powerlessness, are the optical point of view and the eyeline match. In this scene from *The Elephant Man* the initial point of view shots of Merrick taking in the wealth of detail in the room makes us aware of his “lack” which can never be made good. Similarly the shot of Merrick raising his left hand to Mrs. Treves makes us aware of his powerlessness and his desperate desire to behave “properly”, which, due to deformity, he will never be able to do, and the constraints of a society that imposes such strict rules that not all can obey. In the other instances of tears the spectator is entirely present in the room and is aware of more than the individual characters – we see Mrs. Treves’ face after Merrick leaves the room at the beginning of the scene and later we see her cry after looking at the photograph of Merrick’s mother.

Neale (1986, p. 17) also writes that “Melodrama is full of characters who wish to be loved, who are worthy of love, and whom the spectator therefore wishes to be loved.” And the spectator is made aware that Merrick deserves to be loved, that he is worthy of love. Now, whether that is purely sentimental or a sign of sensibility I leave you to decide, but I err on the side of the latter. Several critics have argued that Lynch does no more here than perpetuate an anti-disabled discourse⁷, but, perhaps these scenes can be read from another perspective of empathy and sympathy rather than superiority and condescension? By crying a spectator may be envisaging becoming aware of existing but seemingly lost feelings and the tears may be addressed to and beyond the representations on the screen, the secretions opening up secrets which were hidden but now come back to life.

The Straight Story of 1999 is another film that has been likened to *The Elephant Man* in that both appear to be more “straightforward”, not to say sentimental, narratives based on

real life stories, in comparison with the complex narrative interweaving of *Lost Highway* and *Mulholland Drive*, and the disturbing nature of much of Lynch's subject matter. At several points in *The Straight Story* we are shown the characters crying or on the verge of tears. Early on Alvin and his daughter Rose are shown in mid-shot looking out on to a thunder storm (Figure 20).



Figure 20.

Then we hear the off screen sound of the telephone which Rose goes to answer and the audience hears her, while watching Alvin's reactions, repeating segments of the information she receives: "Uncle Lyle...oh, no...when?" Here we know or surmise, as well as Alvin, that something serious is amiss. The camera presents Alvin in a mid-shot and then it slowly moves towards him in conjunction with the seriousness of the news as we come to realize with him that he must visit his brother. At this moment lightning is heard outside the window and the resulting light coincides with the news and illuminates Alvin's darkened face. The use of the pathetic fallacy here presents us with what Slavoj Žižek refers to as the redemptive power of cliché in Lynch's films.⁸ The reflected rain from the windows which appear to be tears falling down Alvin's face acts as metonymic signifiers for the tears he seeks to keep at bay and which the audience might release at this point. This brings up interesting issues about the gendered representation of tears in these films and the ways in which Lynch both acknowledges gender stereotypes while, at the same time, offering ridiculous and excessive ways of signifying these male tears and clichés generally.

Later on in *The Straight Story* when Alvin is taken in and cared for, while his lawn mower is repaired after careering out of control on his journey, he is taken to a bar by another old-timer, Verlyn Heller and they discuss their activities in the Second World War (Figure 21). The spectator is given privileged information as we hear sounds from the war as both characters recount the horrors that still afflict them. For Alvin's companion it is the sound of a German fighter plane coming down to bombard his platoon; while Alvin recounts the tale of his inadvertent shooting of the regiment's scout which is one memory that "I just can't shake loose". The camera shots are focused on the faces of the two old men as they confess their memories and then takes up a position behind them as the scene finishes as words have been played out; nothing more can be said – tears well up in Alvin's eyes but again they stay within rather than flow down his cheeks.



Figure 21.

In the final scene of the film, after Alvin arrives at Lyle's broken down cabin in the middle of rural Montana, he dismounts to look up at the poorly repaired structure and a shot from his point of view is given of Lyle's empty chair. The spectator might assume that Alvin has arrived too late, that Lyle has already died and the empty chair acts as a metonymic signifier of this death and the pointless feud between them which had stopped them from repairing the damage while they were younger and healthier. Alvin calls out Lyle's name and after a significantly long period of time a reply is eventually heard from inside the cabin. It is as if the building itself uncannily appears to speak via the voice emanating from within.

Symmetrically, these shots relate back to the opening of the film, where we hear Alvin fall from outside of his house as the camera hovers outside the window for a suspiciously long time, as the neighbour Dorothy goes to get buns to eat and is thus unaware of Alvin's plight. At both points it appears as if the house itself is speaking. In the final scene, however, the cabin door opens and we see Lyle, with the aid of a walking frame, come out and with some difficulty take his seat after offering the other seat on the porch to Alvin. Lyle then looks out from the cabin and the next image is a long shot from his point of view on to the John Deere lawnmower and trailer. As this shot stays in view for some time the spectator is put in the situation of imagining Lyle's thoughts as he realizes the immense task Alvin has undertaken to be with him. Lyle then says "Alvin, you ride that thing all the way out here to see me?" to which Alvin replies "I did Lyle." Tears, which were already beginning to well up in Lyle's eyes, and always seem to do so in mine whatever my best intentions, now increase and he averts his head to look up to the sky, as does Alvin. And as the camera follows their gazes we are shown the night sky full of stars into which the camera travels as the credits roll. The image of the sky is not the daylight image to be expected in accordance with the time of day Alvin and Lyle reunite but the transcendent night sky with which the film opens and closes. That this is read by several critics as a corny, sentimental not to say religious image is perhaps limiting as, in a sense, these shots are non- or extra-diegetic and exceed the bounds of narrative motivation – the stars can act as overarching silver teardrops seemingly crying in the sky. Again, we have the sense of the excessive denial of free-flowing male tears which Lynch places onto other objects throughout the film – the sentimental excess of displacement.

Too long

In addition, I would like to add that in Lynch's films tears are often produced by not only being too late, but also by the spectator being in the frame for *too long*. We watch for too long, becoming acutely aware of our indecent, dangerous and yet pleasurable position.

Tears and crying (sounds of distress as well as the fluids to accompany the discharge) are present throughout *Twin Peaks*, which, with its trans-generic structure, perhaps emphasizes some of the points Neale and Copjec make about gender specific structures of melodrama and *film noir*. When Laura Palmer's body is first discovered at the lakeside, it is Deputy Andy Brennan who, as the police photographer, cries before the body is unwrapped. Shortly after this scene the spectator is presented with shots of Mrs. Palmer seeking to establish the whereabouts of her daughter who is not at home in bed. She phones Laura's official boyfriend's, Bobby Briggs' parents, then his football coach, and finally her husband Leland who is at the Great Northern Hotel making a sales pitch with his boss, Benjamin Horne to a group of Norwegian prospective purchasers of a land deal on the site of the Ghost Wood estate.

Throughout these shots the spectator knows much more than Sarah Palmer. We know that Laura is dead and we watch helplessly as her mother's worry and fear intensifies but there is nothing we can do. We see Sarah, from a low angle shot, run up the stairs with the ominous and uncanny ceiling fan turning and emitting a strange low electrical hum, and know that there cannot be anyone up there. Similarly, when she calls Leland at the Great Northern Hotel our anxiety is raised as our anticipation increases. Leland is called away from the meeting, much to Ben Horne's chagrin, to take a telephone call in the lobby. As he starts to speak to his wife the arrival of the Sheriff's jeep screeching to a halt in the background finally brings us to the realization that this moment cannot be delayed any longer. As Leland realizes the importance of Sheriff Truman's arrival, he drops the receiver from which we hear the desperate, plaintive, cry of Sarah Palmer, as she understands what has happened without being told.



Figure 22. Sheriff Truman breaks the news of Laura's death to Leland Palmer, *Twin Peaks* (Twin Peaks Online, 2005)

Annette Davison (2004, p.86), invoking Michel Chion's work on the relationship between vocal cords, umbilical cords, and telephone cords suggests that as the phone falls to the floor the nurturing connection between Laura's mother, and the symbolic connection between nature and industry in *Twin Peaks* is shattered, and that this is reflected in the falling notes of 'The Twin Peaks theme' which plays alongside these images. The final shot in this scene is a close-up of the telephone receiver which has fallen to the floor from which Sarah Palmer's distressed and distressing wails are heard. The use of music and sound here, and throughout Lynch's films, helps to produce the intemperance of excess.

Canned tears

The relationship between sound and music, both diegetic and non-diegetic, in respect of crying is made even more apparent in *Mulholland Drive* (2001) where the "reality" and fantasy of Hollywood, television and film spectatorship are brought sharply into focus. And it is this example which, I would argue, brings together all of the aspects of the debates about tears we have been considering thus far. The film began life as a proposed TV series, in a similar fashion to *Twin Peaks*, but it was cancelled by the TV network ABC, and then, after the commercial success of *The Straight Story*, was given renewed increased funding by Studio

Canal+, the production company which Lynch later sought to save from extinction in a highly publicized advertising campaign.

In *Mulholland Drive* the relationship between what we see on the screen and our perceived knowingness or suspension of disbelief as an audience is constantly undermined. For instance, the initial storyline appears to belong to Rita, and it is only later that it becomes apparent that this is all Diane's dream fantasy. Consequently the audience can never be sure who the characters are and where they and, indeed, we, are placed in Diane's fantasy projection as Betty. In particular, when Betty goes for an audition for a daytime soap her performance is riveting, especially when we have just seen her more prosaic rehearsal shortly before with Rita, acting out, unknown to them, a parody of their break up. While we know that this is an audition scene within a film made up of actors the intensity of her performance and the tears generated indicate the dialectical tension of the audience's absorption and simultaneous acknowledgement of this being constructed for our pleasure.

However, the scene which, for me, best encapsulates the alienating effect and yet absorbing affect of presenting the viewer with the constructedness of film is the Silencio nightclub scene where the two women go late at night after making love. The audience in the club and the spectators are told not to trust anything that appears on the stage – "It is all an illusion" – the master of ceremonies tells us at the outset (Figure 23).



Figure 23. (Tamminen, 2001, 2002)

That does not stop Betty, Rita and the audience (myself at least) from crying in response to the singer's mimed rendition of a Spanish version of Roy Orbison's 'Crying'. We know we've been "had" from the outset and then again when the singer collapses on the floor but the song continues to play, and that is part of the nature of modern spectatorship: we know it's not "real". But this is not purely some modernist alienating device, rather it is or provides for, as Sheli Ayers (2004) claims, the possibilities of a contemporary sensibility and a resurrection of affect, however weak that may be, that is born out of cliché, repetition and an acknowledgement of the audience's understanding of film form, together with the power of the voice to affect a response.

As previously stated, this crucial sequence starts just after Betty and Rita make love. In her sleep Rita speaks several phrases in Spanish and keeps repeating the word "Silencio". Betty wakes up and she agrees to go with Rita to the club after Rita says in a severe voice "Go with me... *Right now*". These words seem excessively severe in their delivery and do not match the post-coital shots shown prior to this; and like much of the dialogue in the film, relate to words and phrases said earlier, which thereby structure the film more in accordance with patterns of repetition rather than cause and effect. The Silencio nightclub scene, in effect,

marks the end of the first, longer, section of the film and the dissolution of Diane's dream/fantasy which can no longer be sustained.

As the Emcee/magician tells the audience of the club and the film that "It is all recorded, It is all a tape. It is an illusion" he raises his arms in the air which coincides with the sound of thunder and Betty starts to shake as if she is having a fit. Then a blue haze envelops the screen and smoke appears prior to the introduction of the crying woman: "La Llorona de Los Angeles, Rebekah Del Rio"⁹ (Figure 24) who stumbles onto the stage with a drunken/drugged meandering gait, yet, as she starts to sing 'Llorando (Crying)' her timing and expression appear to capture perfectly the cadences and emotion of the song. The sound, pitch and intensity of her performance appear genuine and her voice punctures the defensive shells of Rita and Betty who begin to cry in response to the rendition.



Figure 24. (Tamminen, 2001, 2002)

The close-up shots of Rebekah Del Rio shows us her seemingly authentic performance but we should be alerted by now, by what has gone before and also by the Emcee's words. In addition the jewelled tear on the singer's face, like Man Ray's false tears, warn us to be on guard against Lynch's manipulation. As she continues "singing" the camera

shows close-up shots of Betty and Rita's individual responses as drops of tears fall down their cheeks, and then they are shown putting their heads together to cry (Figure 25). The singer collapses, but the recorded music continues to play as she is taken from the stage as the voice, at the height of its intensity, "hangs" in the air.

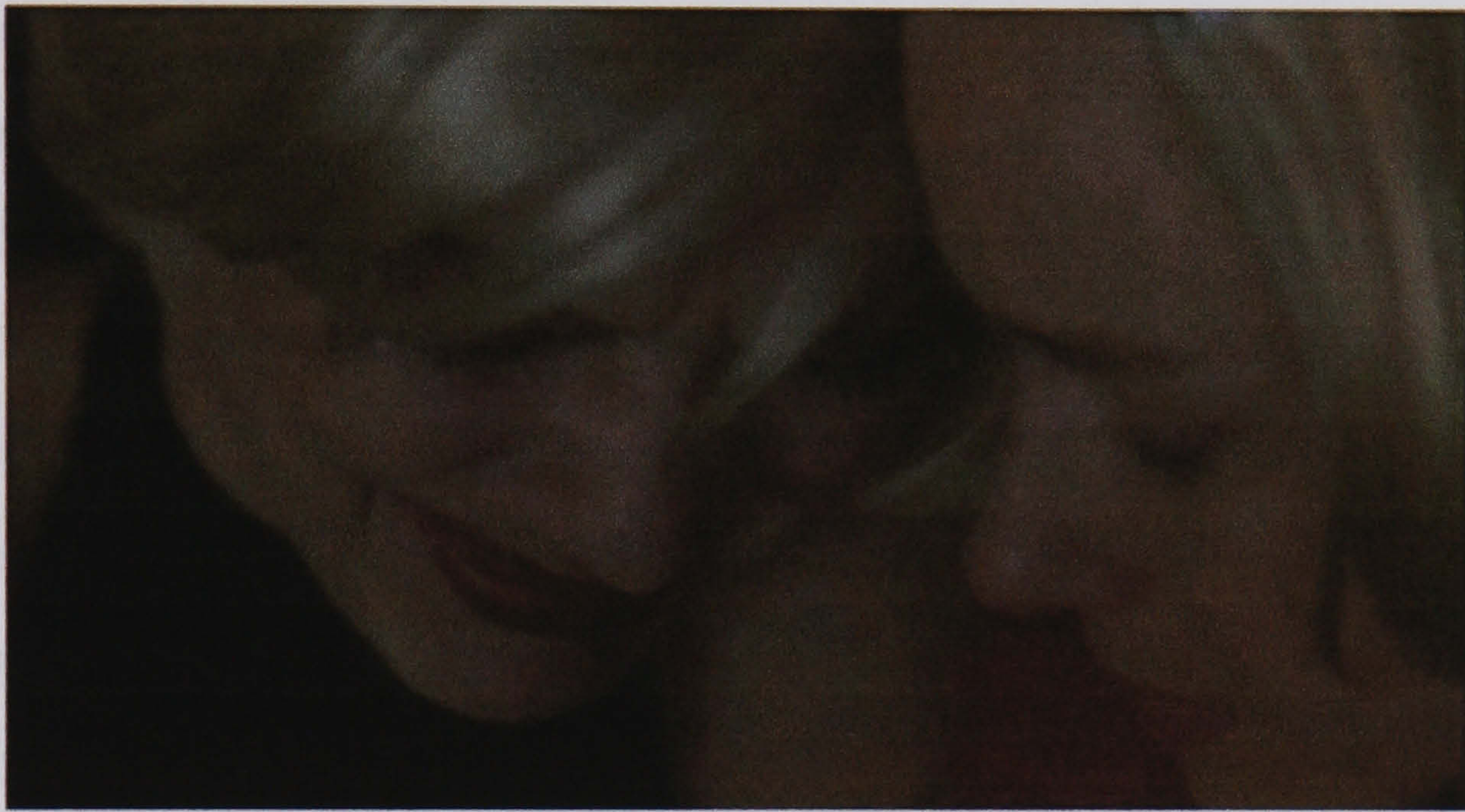


Figure 25. (Tamminen, 2001, 2002)

In this scene the uncanny theatricality of the venue coupled with the mechanical "gap" between recording and performance help to produce the tearful effect of the split between authenticity and artifice, and between absorption and distance in the spectator (see chapter 5 for more detailed readings of the Lynchian uncanny). As Michel Poizat (1992, p.93) points out in his study of opera, "The voice, by definition, is something that is lost." And in Lacanian psychoanalytic discourse the voice (and the gaze) becomes constituted as paramount embodiments of the object *a*, and hence dialecticized in relationship with the Other (Poizat, 1992, p.99). As he explains, the baby's first cry is interpreted by the (m)other and a trace of this initial satisfaction will remain in the child's psyche, while the second cry is already inserted into a network of meanings. Henceforth, "The first object of jouissance can therefore never be recovered in an identical form: it is irremediably lost" (Poizat, 1992, p.101) but

constantly sought in traces of other voices which might promise to make good the lack in the Symbolic.

In the Silencio club scene the voice resonates even more for me, and it would appear Betty and Rita, not only because it is “lost” in the air without a body to transmit it, but also because the words are sung in Spanish and thereby resonate on a largely emotional register. This scene, as several commentators have pointed out, can be compared to Ben’s mimed rendition of Roy Orbison’s ‘In Dreams’ in *Blue Velvet*. But, whereas that film’s miming addressed a masculine structure of *noir*, here we have the voice of feminine *jouissance* which, as Heather K. Love (2004) argues, points to the structural lack in the Symbolic for woman, and in particular the figure of the lesbian who comes to act as one of modernity’s tragic remainders. This is something that I will be taking up again in Chapter 5 but briefly, Love (2004, p.129) argues that Lynch’s film “is remarkable in that it takes Diane’s tragedy seriously”.¹⁰

Dry your eyes (or “stop your greetin’”)

Taking all of these examples together it appears that crying and tears in Lynch’s work presents one form of excess amongst others in his films. At the same time they show that the cross-generic mode of many of Lynch’s films presents the spectator with a confusing array of signifiers, which undercut any clear connection between the components of signs. This may, perhaps, partly explain the status of such work within the “greater” scheme or ideology of American homogenized cinematic culture. For Lynch’s films straddle a line between pre-existing codes and conventions, while, at the same time, frustrating any clear cut relationship between form and meaning. In this regard they work within pre-existing cinematic structures, while they point out the artifice and conventional nature of many of the devices which might appear “natural”. The links into avant-garde practice partly explain how and why these aspects appear and function in the films, but at the same time, I am at pains to point out that the

artifice used may, paradoxically, provide for a reawakening of affect in even the most jaundiced spectator. For melodrama as a genre falls somewhere between comedy and tragedy and is itself an impure hybrid form. In Lynch's films melodrama is often accompanied alongside signifiers of other genres to further complicate readings.

Here we can perhaps also reflect upon the cinema as a modern site for tears. The darkened space of the cinema auditorium perhaps provides us with a privileged, secular, site for our tears to roll as opposed to the well-lit gallery or museum. Here sentiment and sensibility may, perhaps, be reunited. However, in a debate in *Frieze* in October 2004, the novelist and critic Michael Bracewell argued that sentimentality offers "the possibility of reclaiming our deeper subjectivity" (Bracewell and Gillick, 2004, p.124). In opposition to this, the artist Liam Gillick countered that "True sentimentality is always ideologically conservative, and it is dangerous and brave to expose it to ridicule and scorn. Sentimentality casts a veil over truth" (Bracewell and Gillick, 2004, p.125). Bearing in mind the structural inauthenticity of melodramatic, sentimental, paintings of the late eighteenth century, such as Greuze's *A Girl With a Dead Canary*, and the "affected" knowledge of Lynch's films perhaps we can find a way around this impasse. Perhaps images, in still or moving form, offer us a privileged route to seeing the veil that art actually provides rather than conceals.

Tom Lutz concludes his book on tears by making reference to Barbara Kruger's work *Untitled (Who will write the history of tears?)* (1991), in which Barthes' question, with which I started this chapter, is written on a baby's feeding bottle. Lutz answers this question by responding that "we all will". Perhaps this is a good time to return to Barthes, but this time to think about "the third meaning", the obtuse one that outplays obvious meanings, that goes beyond the first two levels of information (communication) and the symbolic level (signification) and is the epitome of a counter-narrative, a signifier without signified. And it must be remembered that Barthes defends the emotion-value of the third meaning, that it is never neutral, and that it always carries with it the traces of love: "I believe that the obtuse

meaning carries a certain *emotion*. Caught up in the disguise, such emotion is never sticky, it is an emotion which simply *designates* what one loves, what one wants to defend: an emotion-value, an evaluation” (Barthes, 1977, p.59).

As Joan Copjec eloquently argues, the structural differences between melodrama and *noir*, between hysterical and obsessional texts and their conjoined specificities which provides the spectator in many of Lynch’s films with incommensurate, incompatible and disproportionate levels of meaning. Her detailed readings of tears also points out how psychoanalytic readings can, and should, be historically sited. By so doing the gaps in other approaches can be breached and our understanding of the role of crying in film can be extended. As such, perhaps what we should be looking for and acknowledging is that the effect of tears in these texts actually reinforces the singular *lack* of recognition rather than a direct empathetic appeal to catharsis. Perhaps the cry is one that will never be understood by the recipient to whom it is purportedly addressed. Nor indeed will it be properly understood by the addressor. In the lack of the Symbolic, rather than offering a way to bind us together, the cry may actually reinforce our separateness. The ethical response, Copjec would suggest, is one that loves what makes one aware of the lack.

So, to respond to Lutz’s reply to Barthes, via Kruger and now via Lynch, I would add that potentially we all could write the history of tears but that this would call for a renewed form of sensibility in line with our postmodern condition. And, as I will go on to discuss in Chapter 6 on contemporary cinematic versions of trauma and tragedy, we might have a long way to go to recover that level of receptivity. As we have seen in our discussion thus far melodrama always consists of the adverb “too”. In Elkins’s analysis Greuze goes too far, is too sentimental and too literary. For Copjec characters in melodrama find out too late. As Steve Neale points out there is always an excess of effect over cause, of too much in relation to the ostensible cause. But the excess of the adverb should alert us, as Copjec (1999, p.264)

says, to “the unfoundedness of the world” and may provide for a renewed form of sensibility – one in which we may have to laugh and cry hysterically.

Driven to Distraction: Cinema Spectatorship along the Lynchian Highway



Figure 26. *Lost Highway* (Hartmann, 2004)

Cars and movies grew in tandem. Like most machines of the nineteenth century, they apply the technology of intermittent motion, as did the sewing machine, the steam train and the machine gun.

(Rees, 2002, p.83)

Ultimately, though, it fell to cinema – the exact contemporary – to explore the cultural potential of the motor vehicle. It is no coincidence that the nostalgic evocation of a golden age for both motoring and movie-going covers the same period: mid-century.

(Kerr, 2002, p.23)

nostalgia *nos-tal'ji-a*, *n* homesickness; the desire to return to some earlier time in one's life, or a fond remembrance of that time, *usu* tinged with sadness at its having passed. – *adj* **nostal'gic**. – *adv* **nostal'gically**. [Gr *nostos* a return, and *algos* pain].

travel sickness nausea experienced, as a result of motion, by a passenger in a car, ship, aircraft, etc.

(Chambers Dictionary, 1998, pp.1106 and 1767)



Hitting the Highway¹

Cars and the road feature heavily in Lynch's films. This chapter is an exploration of the ways in which they function in relation to cinema history. In particular, there are a number of ideas

or notions that I want to look at – the relationship between screens, mirrors, and lenses to sprockets, pixels and spark plugs. The overdetermined, non-literal, interrelationship between technological relations of transport and film is the point from which I wish to consider Lynch's films and their connection to other road movies over the second half of the twentieth century. In so doing I will investigate, via a brief chronological selection of relevant films from this period – *Detour* (Edgar G Ulmer, 1945), *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, 1969), *Vanishing Point* (Richard C. Sarafian, 1970), and *Crash* (David Cronenberg, 1995) – the trajectory of the genre and the changing nature of its central concerns and preoccupations, so as to ascertain Lynch's position within that history.

Have a pleasant journey



Figure 27.

In the early stages of *Mulholland Drive* (2001), immediately after the jitterbug contest and the spectator's entry into the dream/fantasy of the film, the camera follows, from above, an elegant black Cadillac as it glides, slowly and effortlessly, in the dark along the eponymous road of the film's title (Figure 27). The soft white glare of the front headlights, coupled with the warm glow of the red rear lights and the illuminated number plate, give the impression that the car is floating along in an unhurried, meandering, dream-like fashion. Interspersed with these shots of the car are those showing the city of dreams, Los Angeles, below to the left, which looks like a myriad constellation of fairy lights down in the valley (Figure 28).



Figure 28. (Tamminen, 2001, 2003)

As a treatise on the subject of film as being akin to dream, and Hollywood as the home of both cinematic dreams and nightmares, this vantage point seems a most appropriate place to begin to consider the relationship between cars and films.

Jean Baudrillard (1988, pp.51-2) writes of flying over Los Angeles and remarks that “Mulholland Drive by night is an extraterrestrial’s vantage-point on earth, or conversely, an earth-dweller’s vantage point on the Galactic metropolis.” In a comparable fashion the Cadillac appears to glide over the road’s surface, neither fully connected to it nor quite rising above it, but in an elevated location above the city of angels below, thereby offering a distinctive vantage-point on Los Angeles. The seeming dissociation of the car from the ground, and the high angle shots onto the vehicle from above, lends this scene a dream-like, angelic quality in keeping with, but different from, the opening, dizzying, montage shots depicting a bleached out image of Diane, accompanied by her “parents”, winning a jitterbug contest. These opening images are then followed by what we may later come to realise are point-of-view shots of her slowly lowering her head, accompanied by the sounds of her laboured breathing, onto a burgundy coloured pillow as her dream/fantasy of herself as Betty begins and the spectator is taken into this complex, interwoven, narrative.

Returning to the Cadillac's journey, the spectator is then presented with an abrupt shift from the languorous pace of the earlier shots. The car comes to a halt and the man in the front driver's seat turns to the "dark-haired woman" (for, as yet, she has not yet taken the name of "Rita" in Diane's dream fantasy) and, pointing a gun at her, tells her to get out of the car. The man in the passenger seat of the vehicle meanwhile gets out and opens the rear door for her and then puts his hand on her arm to forcibly remove her from the vehicle. At this moment the spectator is given privileged information by the use of omniscient narration and parallel editing, as two cars are shown careering at high speeds, towards the stationary Cadillac. Bright lights, from these car's headlights are shown shining through the Cadillac's windscreen lighting up the frightened face of the dark-haired woman (Figure 29), as one of the joyriding cars crashes into the car. The spectator watches these shots looking out through the windscreen onto the oncoming vehicle, and, at the same time is shown shots of her face as if close to the windscreen, but, seemingly, on the interior side of the car.



Figure 29. (Stopklatka, 2005)

Paul Virilio (1988, p.188) suggests that "What goes on in the windshield is cinema in the strictest sense", and if so, at this point the spectator is presented with cinematic shock shot through two cinematic apparatuses – the camera and the windshield – both of which are projected on to the cinema screen (or the TV screen, or, indeed the computer screen,

depending upon the film's point of exhibition). When the event is staged on the mythologically important cinematic signifier of Mulholland Drive, in the "postmodern" city of Los Angeles, where the car is "king", the impact is significant in a number of ways. The spectator fully enters into Diane's dream/fantasy at the moment of impact. The previous shots act as a sort of a lull into her dream and link into the spectator's cinematic daydream in an analogous fashion. The shock of the impact, and the subsequent shots of the crumpled, burning car, with smoke coming from it as the dark-haired woman crawls from the vehicle and stumbles, in a concussed amnesiac state, down into the city below drags the spectator along, in a comparable manner, for a similarly dislocated and disassociated experience. These fragmentary shots give the spectator a partial feeling of the "trauma" experienced by the dark-haired woman, but which we later come to realise is actually an aspect of Diane Selwyn's trauma and subsequent fantasmatic projection into this dream state.

As A. L. Rees notes in the quotation used at the start of this chapter, cars and movies have a lot in common, and like many nineteenth century inventions incorporate discontinuous motion. Indeed, as I watch clips on my computer I am most aware of the intermittent nature of these images. While they appear fluid and balanced on the television set, on the computer screen these same images appear to break down into stilted, staggering attempts at continual movement. And watching the dark-haired woman, Rita, on the computer screen, I feel a little like I imagine she must feel – slightly dizzy, disorientated and suffering from a form of travel sickness, although in my case this is a form of stationary travel sickness. Rather like watching a live video-cam broadcast over the internet, these computer screened images make me aware of the origins and development of the technology – new indeed!

At the same time, the development of digital technology, as many commentators are remarking², permits the reinvestigation, from another vantage point, of earlier forms of cinematic technology and production as a means of understanding, in light of changes in

technology, what earlier forms of cinematic cultures were doing. And the computer screen permits, or rather potentially provides for, a third space of representation in the way, for instance, that Jean-Luc Godard uses it in *Eloge de l'amour* (2001); as neither camera nor screen, but as both at the same time³. In particular, this is apparent during the second section of the film, shot in saturated colour, where Godard uses the screen to “hold” several types of image together. So, for example, the screen presents a seemingly still, painterly image of a boat on the sea, only for it to then transform into the moving image. Later still several images coalesce at once together on the virtual plane of representation (figure 30), which problematizes notions of surface and depth and the spectator’s relationship to the image. “It is just an image” Godard once said, but now the “just” appears more complicated and intriguing than ever, and the “just” of past images may reveal more in the passing of time from a new vantage point: the future anterior of art⁴.

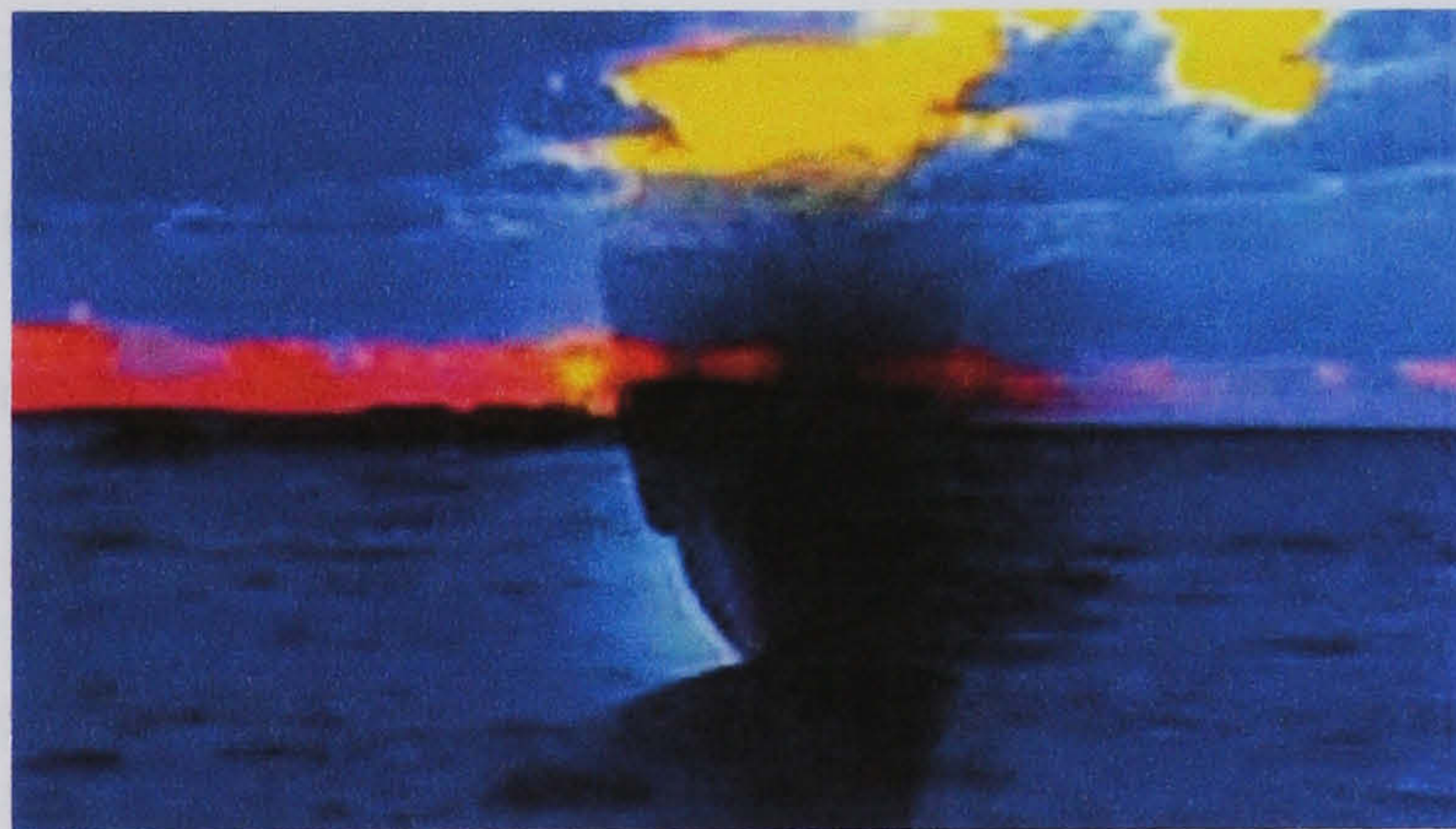
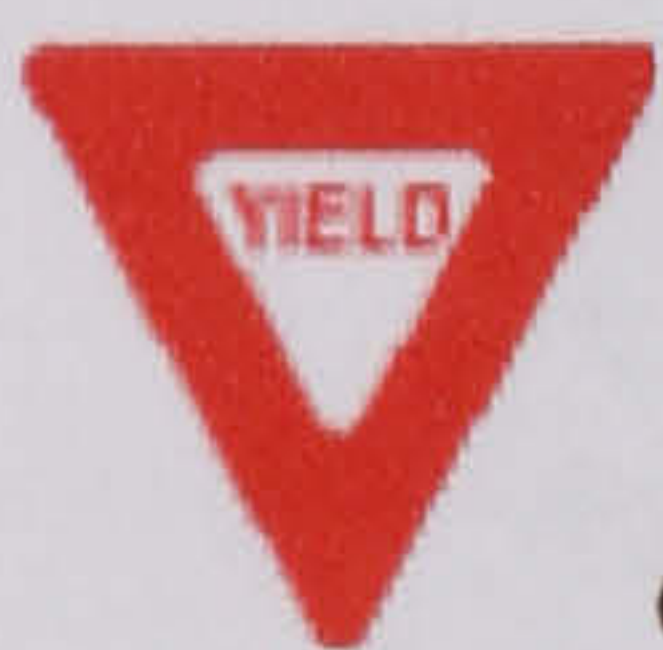


Figure 30 *Eloge de l'amour* (sensesofcinema, 2005)

And Godard’s vehemently anti-American film brings me back, after this brief detour (but the issues it raises will return, this is not to be a cul-de-sac, rather more of a U-turn), to *Mulholland Drive*. At specific points during this initial scene, interspersed with shots of the car and those of Los Angeles, are ones of the eponymous road sign (figure 27), which is highlighted and overexposed, seemingly in accordance with the motivation of the car’s headlights. After the crash when the dark-haired woman stumbles into L.A. the spectator is

presented with other highlighted street signs: firstly, Franklin Avenue; and then Sunset Boulevard. The latter, along with Mulholland Drive, are important intertextual references within cinematic history, and specific tropes of *noir* as well as markers of liminal spaces within this and other Lynch films. For example, similar shots of Lincoln Avenue in *Blue Velvet* are used to specify this dangerous location which marks Jeffrey's passage from conventional family life towards his primal scene with his fantasy parents, Frank and Dorothy.

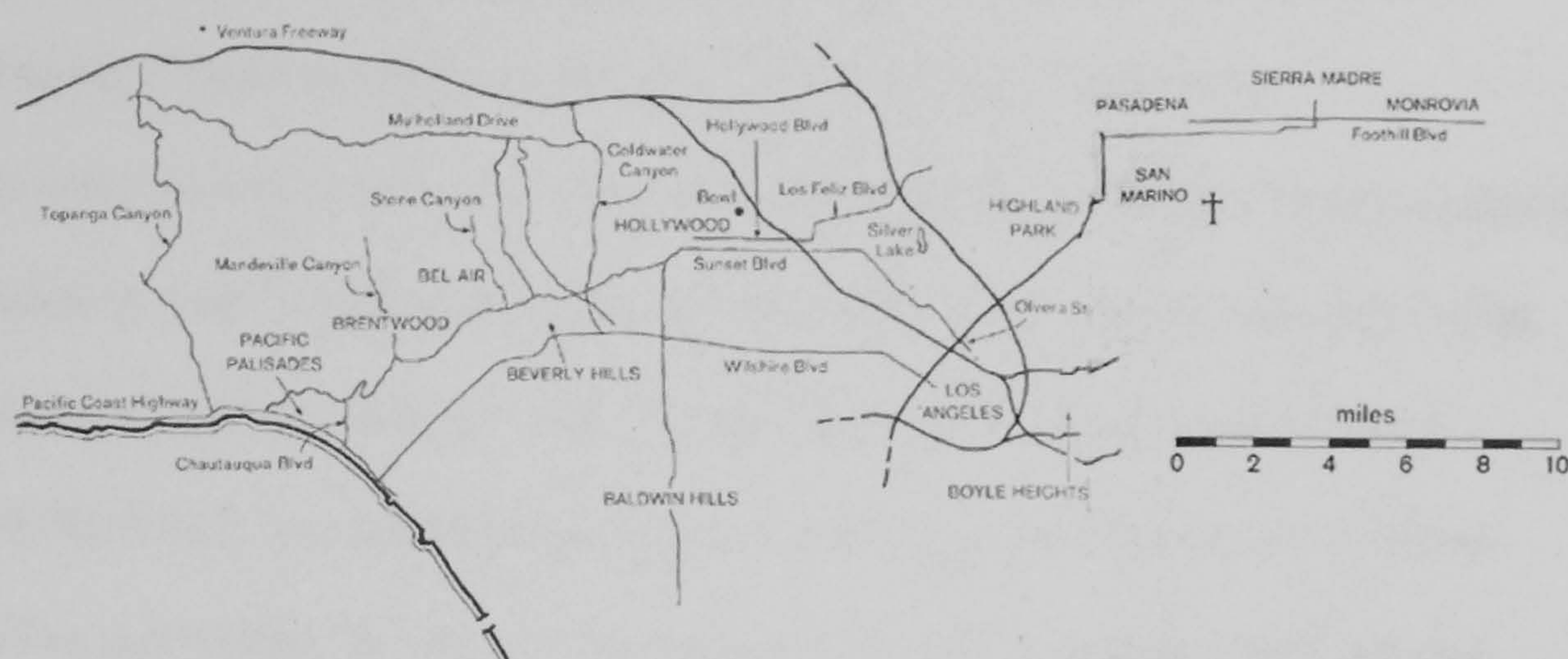
Later on in *Mulholland Drive*, in the shorter second section of Lynch's film, which depicts Diane's true existence in Hollywood, one of failure rather than success, in which she decides to kill her ex-lover; a similar journey takes place. However, this time Diane is driven to a dinner party where Camilla and her new lover, the film director Adam Kesher, are celebrating their engagement. Diane's car comes to a halt at exactly the same point on Mulholland Drive, and the man in the driver's seat turns to Diane but on this version of the journey it is to tell her that there is a surprise for her as Camilla arrives to walk her up the hill to the party, during which, due to her jealousy, Diane decides that she has to kill Camilla. The shorter second part of the narrative structure of the film thereby sets out Diane's decision and actions, while the first is her dream fantasy which seeks to alter the course of events that have already been put in place. The use of repetition links the two parts together in an uncanny fashion, as each time the same words or phrases appear to take on other, different, meanings in light of their changed circumstances.



Coming to a temporary stop

I've never been to Los Angeles, not in a literal sense anyway. My "knowledge" of the city derives entirely from its cinematic representations, stories from news reports and literary sources. While the road and street names conjure up a range of exciting connotations I have a

need to get a sense of geography to provide some assistance in my exploration of the city and its environs (see Figure 31).



39. Map of the foothill communities

Figure 31. Map of the LA foothills communities (Banham, 1971, pp. 102-103)

That's better, I now "know" where I am. So the dark-haired woman had some way to stumble to make it to Sunset Boulevard (it's a good job Norma Desmond no longer resides there - although changing her name to Norma may have put a completely different spin on things - no wonder Diane didn't allow "Rita" to adopt that name in her dream fantasy! ⁵). The chosen locations from the city reverberate with intertextual connotations in Lynch's relationship with Los Angeles, or more particularly, Hollywood. But this ambivalence to the city and its film history runs through the history of *noir*, in both its literary and cinematic forms. As Sheen and Davison (2004, p. 3) rightly point out:

one of the most important features of Lynch's work is his continuing engagement with the *noir* aesthetic. Arguably the strand of film-making that has maintained the disruptive potential of European traditions within mainstream production, *noir* has emerged in post-classical Hollywood as the narrative and stylistic template for an independent aesthetic.

It is this connection between *noir*, L.A., Lynch, vehicles and the road, that particularly interests me, for here, I would argue, is a crucial quilting-point in the interconnection between

the creative endeavours of the filmmakers with capitalist technologies and the profit system. As Mike Davis (1990, p. 18) writes, “Los Angeles...is, of course, a stand-in for capitalism in general...that it has come to play the double role of utopia *and* dystopia for advanced capitalism. The same place as Brecht noted, symbolized both heaven and hell”.

Hollywood, as Davis goes on to say, was metaphorically remodelled during the period of the depression by both American novelists and the influx of anti-fascist European exiles, particularly those émigré directors like Billy Wilder (director of, among others, *Sunset Boulevard*, 1950), Fritz Lang and Edward Dmytryk, and writers and intellectuals such as Theodor Adorno and Bertold Brecht. And through its renewals or reawakening “*noir* has nonetheless remained the popular and, despite its intended elitism, ‘populist’ anti-myth of Los Angeles” (Davis, 1990, p. 21). It is in this context that *Mulholland Drive* and *Lost Highway* (1997) can be sited as the continuation and development of the themes and styles that have run through *noir* since its inception and the genre’s complex relationship to the city and cinema.

Noir has always contained the core of its author’s seething frustration yet fascination with the industry: “the *noir* of the 1930s and 1940s (and again in the 1960s) became a conduit for the resentments of writers in the velvet trap of the studio system” (Davis 1990, p. 38). We can certainly bring this up to date with reference to Lynch’s films which continue to explore this relationship between film-makers and the industry. What Lynch does in *Mulholland Drive* is to explore poetically this relationship through the complexities of the film’s structure and style which is analogous to the relationship between creativity and profit in the filmmaking industry. The whole of this film reverberates with the tension between the two. It is no longer only situated metaphorically, it now occupies the surface of the screen at the level of the diegesis and the uncanny counterpart of the sounds and images emanating at different levels or registers within. Think only of the meeting between Adam Keshler and the film’s backers which encapsulates all of these issues in its strangely realized mood with Mr Roque listening

in as the overall controller. Think also of Keshler's drive to meet the strange figure of the Cowboy at the ranch at the end of Mulholland Drive. The fantasies and tensions of *noir* are, in these films writ large; they no longer occupy the shadowy hinterlands of the film's frame. Openly staged, but elliptically presented, they offer up images and stories of beautiful and strange connections between art and commerce, intertwining but never quite separating, offering the spectator a ride on a Möbius strip. Or else, like one of Cathy de Monchaux's sculptures, they present the alluring but simultaneously frightening but also strangely attractive spectacle of the vice-like grip of the vice-ridden velvet light trap of Hollywood (Figure 32).



Figure 32. Cathy de Monchaux, *Don't Touch My Waist* (detail) (Artnet, 2005)

Here, it may also be useful to consider Frederic Jameson's (1993) work on that great *noir* author of Los Angeles, Raymond Chandler. For Jameson, spaces in Chandler become "characters" or *actants* in the ensuing dramas. And, in a Heideggerian sense of the division between World and Earth, albeit in the aesthetically compromised city of Los Angeles, Chandler's representations "consists in holding the two incommensurable dimensions apart and in allowing us thereby to glimpse them simultaneously in all their scandalous irreconcilability" (Jameson, 1993, p. 49). In Lynch's work, I would argue, the holding apart of

the “two incommensurable dimensions” becomes even more pronounced. Similarly the aesthetic and formal characteristics of Lynch’s films have a socio-historical significance all of their own. Jameson (1993, p.34) also remarks that the episodic limits of Chandler’s novels are themselves of social and historical significance in “that it was his society that lacked imagination and that such undoubted limits are those of the narrativity of Chandler’s socio-historical raw material”. In much the same way the elliptical and poetical nature of Lynch’s films about the film industry also contain the gaps in the socio-historical raw material of postmodern capitalism where the economic base is hidden behind the fantasy of cinematic production and commodity fetishism.

Davis (1990, p. 44) argues that “A major revival of *noir* occurred in the 1960s and 1970s as a new generation of émigré writers and directors revitalized the anti-myth and elaborated it fictionally into a comprehensive counter-history”. The films he refers to here include *Chinatown* and *Blade Runner*. He suggests that “the postmodern role of L.A. *noir* may be precisely to endorse the emergence of *homo reaganus*”...[where] The result feels very much like the actual moral texture of the Reagan-Bush era: a supersaturation of corruption that fails any longer to outrage or even interest” (Davis, 1990, p. 45). He is, of course, referring to the first Bush administration, not the frightening (re)appearance of the avenging son. But his comments are, perhaps, even more apposite when one takes into account current events where terrorist acts mirror back to America (Hollywood) its own fantasy visions of disasters, in which these acts of spectacular violence bring back home as a nightmare what it only dreamt about in the safety of its own cinemas, but propagated on the rest of the world as its hegemonic vision of escapism, only for it to reappear as the Others’ letter home. But, here the Other is perhaps rather a mirror of the Same.

Davis specifically refers to writers in his analysis of postmodern *noir*, and he singles out James Ellroy as a prime case, together with Bret Easton Ellis’s yuppie *noir*, as a means of

encapsulating what Thomas Pynchon refers to, in *Vineland* (1990) as “the restoration of fascism in America” via the Disneyfication of *noir* (Quoted in Davis 1990, p. 46. And I’ll come back to Disney when we come to *The Straight Story*). What I want to argue is that Lynch’s films involving Los Angeles, maintain and develop the original complexities and mood of the original *noirs* and their, symbolically staged, ambivalent relationship between the filmmaker and the industry. And I will now look in more detail at the ways in which these films provide that *noir*-ish mood via the role played by the mobile symbol of L.A. – the car – in these cinematic visions.



Making a detour

As Los Angeles is the home of the North American film industry, its appearance in *film noir* as both a starting point for journeys and as a point of return is therefore not surprising. The city becomes the desired destination in Edgar G. Ulmer’s road B-movie, *Detour*, of 1945. Here, Al Roberts hitch-hikes from New York to Los Angeles to try and meet up again with his girlfriend, Sue, to make a new, better life for themselves in the west. Los Angeles offers a utopian hope for the two of them where Sue might make it in the movies and Al’s musical talents will be more properly rewarded rather than eking out a living playing the piano in a night club (but somehow, mixed up in Al’s ennui, the viewers know that he will never make it, that events will get in the way). However, they are never to meet up again as Al gets caught up in an ever increasing vortex of fate inflicted crime. This B-movie, which was made in only six days, incorporates all of the strangeness of the cheap image, which acts as an index of the economic conditions of production, while, at the same time, uncovering and defamiliarizing the cinematic signifier in unexpected ways.

David Laderman (2002, p. 23) suggests that the road movie needs to be understood in relation to classical film genres so that “The Western, for example, is a classical genre of substantial formative significance for the road movie...both genres explore wandering and/or migration in narrative and aesthetic terms”. In *Detour* this wandering is a form of nihilistic horror from which Al Roberts cannot escape. Rather than the road and the trip west offering a means of salvation and redemption as in some Westerns, Roberts is stuck on the road and unable to get off it. The driver, Charles Haskill Jr., who offers him a lift and who subsequently falls from the car and dies by hitting his head on a rock, leads Roberts into a descending spiral from which he has no way out. (Similarly, The Western may have, initially, offered hope for the new settlers, but their near extermination of the indigenous population meant that the seeds of destruction were already sown. As such, the new Eden was already contaminated, so that when we change from the horse to the car, even that utopia was damaged and any journey was likely to lead into danger).

This is followed by his offer of a lift to Vera, who realizes that Roberts has taken over Haskell’s identity, because she was the one who fought off Haskell’s rape attempt on her when she took a lift from him earlier on, which provides a form of repetition compulsion that the spectator must know can only end in tragedy, with Robert’s failure to metaphorically get off the road. Vera has got ahead of Al, due to the time spent disposing of the body of Haskell, and she repeats the journey she had with the first “Haskell”, only this time, the shrill, monstrously depicted *femme fatale* is, metaphorically, in the driving seat all the time.



Figure 33. Al Roberts and Vera on the road with no escape in sight.

At the end of the film, which takes us back to its starting point, when Roberts leaves the diner and walks dejectedly up the road, he knows that he cannot escape his fate, that the road has closed in on him and so he wearily accepts his lot and climbs into the police car. The narrative framework of the film is set out in a cyclical structure which emphasizes the relationship and links between earlier road *noirs* and their contemporary counterparts. Geraint Bryan (1999, p.49, emphasis in the original) argues that “**Detour** is the ultimate road *noir*, with the kind of fatalistic belief in destiny usually encountered in Greek Tragedy”. Lynch’s films continue to develop, in other ways, the psychical and geographical complexities implicit in the original *noir* cycle where the car and the road are really lures and traps and not symbols of freedom.



Slippery Signs: From road rage to road sage

In relation to Lynch’s films, Stuart Mitchell (1999) suggests that although *Wild at Heart* is his only “real” road movie, that *Blue Velvet* and *Lost Highway* also explore the genre’s concepts and preoccupations. Indeed he goes on to suggest that: “These three Lynch films occupy consecutive life-stage journeys: through adolescence [*Blue Velvet*], to the early 20’s [*Wild at Heart*] and into mid-life crises [*Lost Highway*]; revealing the sexually troubled, the parentally

liberated and the anxiously paranoid” (Mitchell, 1999, p.242). We can now add to this list *The Straight Story* (1999) which moves on into old age, providing for a quartet of films with the road as one of their central organizing principles, and in this chronological analysis offers a linear progression along life’s highway in terms of the temporality of the film’s production and the age of the film’s main characters.

Regarding *The Straight Story*, Devin Orgeron (2000, p.44) writes that:

Where his previous films critiqued the postmodern condition by participating in its chaos, *The Straight Story* achieves its criticism by denial. Lynch, then, finds the elusive – as opposed to the lost – highway. The film’s success, however, seems to hinge upon a troglodytic fear of technology and an almost neo-Victorian notion of family that Lynch’s films have always upheld, and that Disney has historically sought to disseminate.

In contrast to this approach Slavoj Žižek (2001b, p. 144) argues that Alvin Straight represents the ethical subject in Lynch’s films:

What, then, if this is the ultimate message of Lynch’s film – that ethics is “the most dark and daring of all conspiracies”, that the ethical subject is the one who in fact threatens the existing order, in contrast to a long series of weird Lynchean perverts (Baron Harkonnen in *Dune* (1984), Frank in *Blue Velvet*, Bobby Peru in *Wild at Heart*) who ultimately sustain it.

What we have, in the first of these quotations, is the often repeated contention of conservatism in relation to Lynch’s films, against which Žižek offers a very different reading. Without wishing to reiterate the views put forward by the various critics as set out in the introductory chapter, I will continue to use Lynch’s road movies to explore what they tell us about the tropes of the genres from which they derive. This, I hope, will help to circumnavigate any impasse between the critical reactions to the films so far discussed.



Head Trips

In *Lost Highway* Fred Madison's journey starts in Los Angeles, the home of *noir*, to where he *has* to return, before seeking to avoid the police chase by driving into the desert. Yet Madison's road journey is really an interior one within his mind (as it and all films are truly psychic journeys/explorations), and like Al Roberts's it is one from which there is no escape. At the start of the film Fred hears a voice from his intercom saying "Dick Laurent is dead", and at the end of the film, he repeats these same words into the intercom before he jumps back into his car in an attempt to flee from the police. Yet again the car as the mythological symbol of freedom is really a trap, and as Bryan (1999, p. 49) points out: "the road in the *noir* movie offers not hope but negation. The fugitives move because they've got no choice and so in a dark twist the road represents not freedom but imprisonment". Bryan is talking about the original *noirs*, but surely the same can be said of Lynch's "21st century *noir*"? In the latter case there does not appear to be freedom anywhere: even fantasy offers no escape from the horrors of the Real. In *Detour* Roberts wearily accepts his fate, which must come as a form of release; whereas, in *Lost Highway* Fred's head once again 'Baconizes'⁶ as he is once again driven to madness.



Figure 34. Fred's has his bacon again (Hartmann, 2004)

Earlier when Fred transmogrifies into Pete in the prison cell his fantasy projection sends him off onto the highway to meet his fantasy alter ego who becomes his psychic hitchhiker (Figure 35).



Figure 35. (Hartmann, 2004)

Yet this fantasy projection ultimately breaks down and he eventually has to return to himself as Fred. But during the fantasy life Pete can appear to enjoy, briefly, the illusion/delusion of a successful sexual relationship with his fantasmatic alter-egoic female partner Alice. Pete first meets Alice when Mr. Eddy/Dick Laurent brings his Cadillac into the garage for Pete, “his” mechanic to work on. Immediately before this Pete is shown lying under a vehicle as the freeform bebop jazz, played by Fred Madison earlier on in the film, comes on to the radio. The sound affects Pete’s ears and he retunes the radio to something more soothing, much to the chagrin of Phil, another mechanic. Ears are an important organ of meaning in this film. An ear is similarly the central metaphor used to depict Jeffrey Beaumont’s descent into, and out of, the netherworld in *Blue Velvet*. Previously, when Pete had de-tuned Mr. Eddy’s Mercedes, prior to the latter’s violent attack on the tailgater, Mr. Eddy had told his henchmen that Pete has the “Best god-damn ears in town”. And it is through his ears that Fred Madison’s fantasy as Pete starts to pain him at this point in the film. However, by altering the music and taking away the psychic pain the fantasy can continue, and he sees Alice Wakefield in the passenger seat of Mr. Eddy’s car (Figure 36)



Figure 36. Arrival of Alice Wakefield (Hartmann, 2004)

The spectator also sees the Cadillac and Alice from Pete's point of view, from a low angle, as if working under a car where the viewing position is affected by a car's tyre in the line of sight. The use of slow motion at this point also highlights the importance of this scene in this section of the film and later in the eventual disintegration of Pete's fantasy when "she" disappears from her photograph at Andy's house as the police close in on him. The flow of the narrative is slowed down and thereby heightened by the change of speed as it presents the spectator with the affect that Alice/Renee has in Pete's/Fred's psyche. The accompanying music, Lou Reed's "Magic Moment" anchors the meaning of this "initial" meeting, based purely on vision with no words said between the two characters, as the non-diegetic music acts as an imaginary dialogue between them:

*This Magic Moment
So different and so new
was like any other
until I met you...*

*...and then it happened.
It took me by surprise*

*I knew that you felt it too.
I could see it by the look in your eyes...*

*...Sweeter than wine
Softer than a summer's night
Everything I want, I have
Whenever I hold you tight...*

...This magic moment,

*While your lips are close to mine,
Will last forever,
Forever, 'til the end of time*

But, of course, this dream of popular culture cannot last until the end of time, it is contingent not transcendent. Yet at this moment the depicted present tense, in its slow motion revelation, suspends fantasy while partaking of the Real. And the car, the sexually charged Cadillac, fuses together sexuality and women in a way which is used, perhaps, as an allegorized cliché of American car fetishism. Karal Ann Marling (2002, p. 357) points out that:

By 1959, the Cadillac tail fin had acquired a life of its own: it towered three and one-half feet above the pavement. And as the back end rose, the front end strained forward: in 1953, Cadillac bumpers were finished off with new, factory-fresh ‘gorp’ in the form of ‘bombs’ or ‘Dagmars’ (named for the late-night bombshell of the moment) – protruding breasts that were utterly devoid of utility and impossible to repair after the most minor of collisions.



Figures 37 and 38. Alice steps out of the Cadillac and into Pete's world.

In the first shot above, Alice is shown opening the door and is framed by the camera and the car's window frame, highlighting the different technologies of fantasy and desire, while in the second shot she comes into full view and looks back at Pete. But it is a strange look; one of blankness that is echoed by the whiteness of the background and which does not appear to suggest a reciprocal attraction but one that can come to act as a cipher for Pete's (or

should I say Fred's) sexual desires. And it is the blankness that Fred projected onto Renee, the outcome of which he, ultimately, cannot escape from. Here the film seems acutely aware of the tropes and conventions depicting desire in *noir*, in which the woman and the car are conjoined in fantasies of male desire.

In *Lost Highway* Fred's fantasy finally comes apart in the desert where, initially in the guise of Pete, he goes with Alice. They make love on the ground, brightly lit up by the car's headlights, in slow motion to the non-diegetic sounds of This Mortal Coil's "Sounds for the Siren". This scene acts as a reiteration of the sex scene in the film prior to Renee's murder which acts as a form of prefigurement of the murder yet to occur (See chapter 5). In the desert the two characters initially appear to be in a mutually enjoyable sexual encounter until Pete says "I want you", to which Alice retorts "You'll *never* have me", as she once again becomes Renee and Pete returns to himself as Fred, and the impossibility of the sexual relation comes again to the fore. He then follows Renee up the stairs into the wooden hut, but he does not encounter her. Instead he meets again the superegoic Mystery Man who chases him from the building with his hand-held camera.

Fred manages to drive away to the Lost Highway motel where Renee is being fucked by Mr. Eddy. Only this time, after Renee has left, Fred forcibly takes Mr. Eddy back to the desert and with the Mystery Man kills him. From here Fred can only seek to escape once again by driving away, and on his way has to return to his home in Los Angeles to repeat into the intercom the words he first heard at the beginning of the film, only this time he is aware that it is he who is/was speaking all along. Then, followed by a succession of police cars he can find no way to escape (see Figure 34). At the end of the film we return to its beginning; the audience has been taken on a circular journey from which there is no escape, no resolution to the dilemmas posed by the narrative. And yet these shots of the road in front of the car offer a different form of meaning to the narrative of the film. They appear to be abstracted from the

diegetic world, but, at the same time, they do not entirely tally with the preceding shots. It is as if the spectator has been deposited on his/her own lost highway without the support of narrative closure to sustain any overall semblance of unity. As in earlier *noirs* the road does not offer escape but, rather, imprisonment or entrapment from which, it appears, none of us can escape. But Al Roberts could at least slump wearily into the rear of the police car, and we can quietly leave the cinema or put the kettle on knowing that he has to suffer his fate. Fred, however, has no escape in sight and he must keep driving while the spectator, similarly, has no sense of narrative closure or overall coherence.



Other journeys

Moving on now to consider other road movies we can see that the 1960s presented different versions of the road and its problems from those offered in the original *noir* cycle. For instance, *Easy Rider* (1960) seemingly presents a different trajectory in its counter-cultural search for America to that depicting the psychosis of Fred Madison. Here the journey, similarly, ventures from the west to the (south) east; from the city to the country, via the Mardi Gras in New Orleans immediately prior to the violent ending (a location which plays a prominent role in *Wild at Heart*, and, in particular, in the violent voodoo death of Johnnie Farragut). On a surface level Wyatt and Billy appear to be very different figures to Fred who is trapped within his own mental turmoil. But the road similarly offers no solutions or freedom for them either. From drug deal to death the two characters never quite fit into the various communities they come across on their journey.

At the beginning of their trip the two riders are shown on their motorbikes immediately before setting off. They enter from the right of the frame and then stop before the highway. Within the shot they are themselves framed by the remnants of an older structure

which may be the walls of a Native American building, which, we assume, may have been demolished in the genocide that created the “New Country”. There follows a series of shots showing Wyatt looking at his watch and subsequently throwing it on to the ground. In the first shot he raises his left hand and looks intently at the watch face. Following this we are given a close up of his face and then a cut to him pulling the watch off and casting it to his left. The camera pulls back to reveal his face, and then cuts to a shot of the watch as it lies on the ground. These shots appear striking in the way in which they do not offer the continuity flow of classical Hollywood films, but whose non-sequential editing provides an alternative to the mainstream conventions more in keeping with the *Nouvelle Vague*. These early indications of a different form of road journey provide a means through which to read this film against its predecessors and indeed subsequent road movies. These images are followed by a cut to a shot of the two bikers together and then they set off on the road. At this point Wyatt has seemingly cast time aside; he no longer has to be shackled by the constraints of mainstream culture. Instead he is apparently free to ride down life’s highway at his own pace to wherever he wishes. However at various points in the film he comes back to the question of time and its hold over him. As Alistair Daniel (1999, p. 75) points out “At the very beginning he throws his watch away in the desert, and at the commune claims to be ‘hip about time’, yet he refers repeatedly to their distance from New Orleans in terms of days rather than miles”.

In a very real sense Wyatt, Billy and indeed George, the lawyer they meet on the way, are framed by the culture to which they run counter. The predominant culture and its economic base provide the framework from within which they challenge its codes and conventions, and which; ultimately, just for being there they are eventually all killed. This can be seen in Figure 39 when Billy and Wyatt cross over a railway bridge, shots of which are used at the start of the journey and which, alongside the perspective views of the highway, provide the framework for their trip. The steel and iron girders put in place by earlier settlers

in their struggle to tame the land and open it up to capitalist enterprises thereby gives the travellers the road structures upon which they can travel, but, at the same time it provides a certain means of travel – their route is not entirely free and open. Off the road is the desert, the waste land, which is itself “Other” in that it has failed to be successfully absorbed into the rules of the capitalist symbolic.

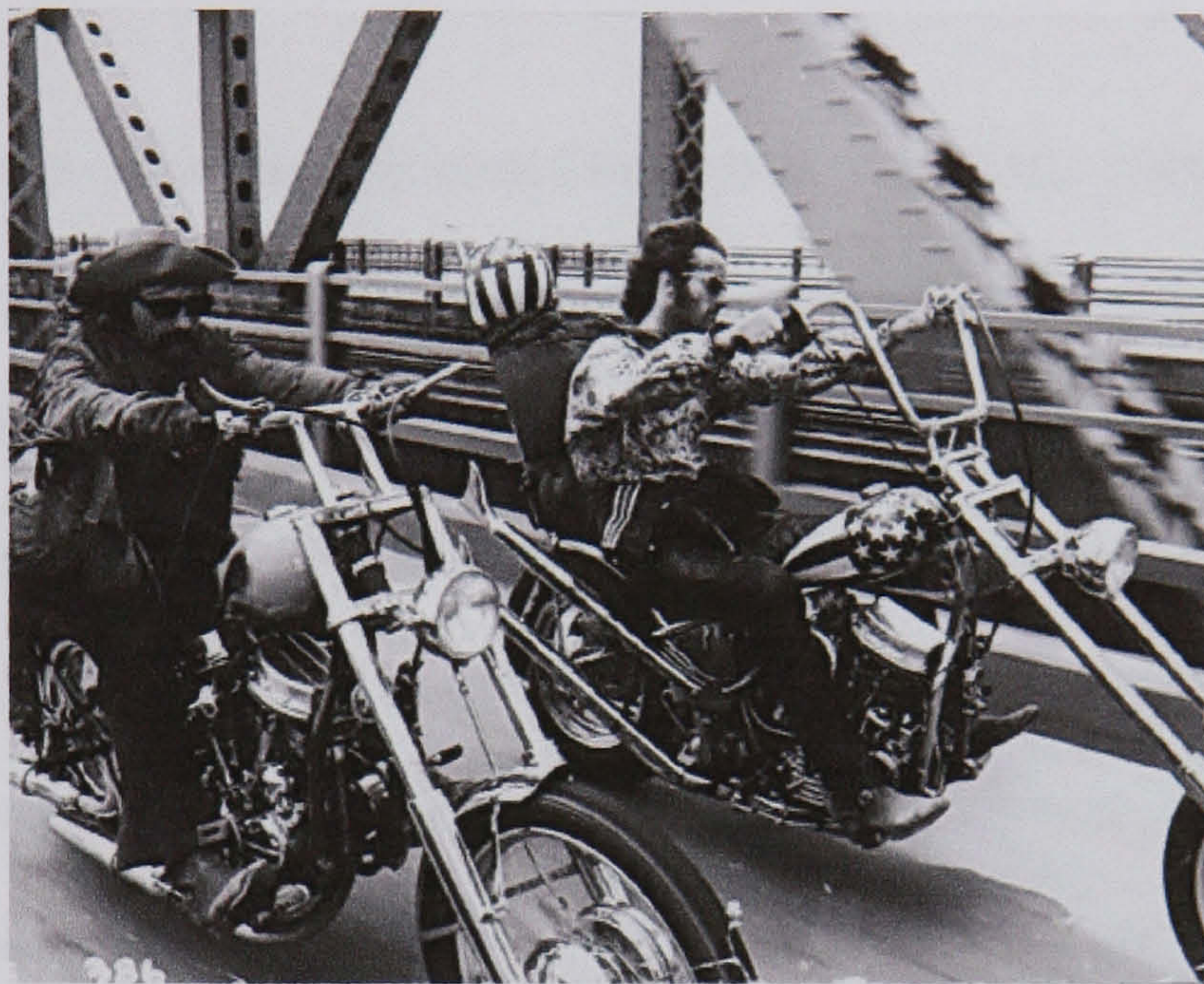


Figure 39. Billy and Wyatt on the road

Billy and Wyatt are able to cross borders, whereas George seems shackled. At one point he mentions that he has tried, on several occasions, to cross the border without success. This time, with his new buddies he is successful in this endeavour, although it will lead to his death as the bigoted southerners who “patrol” these areas do not accept the different life styles these three travellers offer. Again, while potentially offering choice, the road is again not free of the ideology of the wayside inhabitants.



Figure 40. Alvin Straight follows 30 years later

I cannot know how Alvin Straight would have responded in the 1960s to such travellers of the counter-culture, but he does say to the young cyclists he comes across on his journey that the worst thing about being old is remembering being young. But he seems such a kind old man, haunted by his Second World War-time traumas, that perhaps he understood all that anti-Vietnam stuff. For Alvin, crossing the Mississippi River is also a significant milestone in his epic journey, again made possible by the engineering feats of earlier pioneers.

All of these films are dependent upon the road surface as a means of travelling. The travel trajectories are framed by the existing road structures, however much the travellers think that they are in control of the routes. But, what happens off the road?



Off- roading

In *Vanishing Point* (1970), coming at the end of the 1960s, Kowalski’s attempts to escape capture by the police aided by “Super Soul” the blind, black, DJ who acts as his “eyes and ears” leads him off the road and into the desert. Kowalski heads deep into the wilderness when two police cars, which take over the entire road, drive towards him in an attempt to make him stop. The police decide to leave him and not to give chase. One of the officers speaks into his

walkie-talkie saying “I’ll let him cook out there for a while. He ain’t going nowhere.”

Kowalski, who is nicknamed by Super Soul as “The Last American Hero”, drives around creating his own lattice work of tyre marks in an attempt to define a route for himself within the vast expanse of the desert; or, rather, to try and map out a form of meaning for himself in this barren land. Eventually, however, as he double-crosses his own tyre marks he comes to his own crossroads, both literally and metaphorically. There does not appear to be anywhere left to go. However, he soon comes across an old man who lives in the desert and hunts for rattlesnakes. He provides Kowalski with a means of escape, and shows him that even within the desert there are people living a life outside mainstream conventions, albeit a rather alienated, subsistence life.

We also find out that Kowalski is a Vietnam vet who was honourably discharged from the army and who received a Medal of Honor. Later he joined the Police force from where he was dishonourably discharged and his life has been on a downward spiral ever since. The information about Kowalski’s life is given to the audience in various ways as the film progresses. However, the opening shots of the road blockade being set up, which links into a title message that takes us back to two days before, forewarns us that this journey, again, can only end in tragedy. We find out that Kowalski’s lover died whilst surfing, which provides some causal indication for his attitude. But, this seems insufficient as the ultimate cause, and through the bits of information that become available as the film progresses, it is a realization that it is the culmination of many events which have led to this situation some of which will never be fully disclosed.

Coming just two years after *Easy Rider* which offered an insight into the dissolution of the counter-cultural dream, *Vanishing Point* presents the aftermath where as Jack Sargeant (1999, p. 94) points out:

The remnants of the hippies in *Vanishing Point* are presented as grubby and dirty, as borderline street-people in Denver – they are no longer the “beautiful” people they once were...The belief in any mystical/religious interpretation of the world has also disintegrated, the sixties search for spiritual enlightenment has ended in the desert.

The dream of the sixties has come to an end. The preacher and his flock live in the desert and do not seem interested in preaching to anyone else, rather they have withdrawn from such activities into their own private spectacle (if that is not an oxymoron).

Leaving the desert Kowalski comes across two gay men in a broken down car with a sign saying “Just Married” on it. These two characters are stereotypically represented and, at this point, the film seems to have come to its own dead end in its bigoted depiction of Others. Perhaps the appearance of 70s radicalism via the Gay and Lesbian Movement and Feminism are negatively prefigured here but the film’s inability to adequately represent these characters takes us to the end of the road and this film’s limits in representation.

At the denouement we see Kowalski driving towards the road block, and a close up of his smiling face indicates his willingness to go out in a blaze of glory rather than submit to the authorities. The road has literally come to an end, but it is a false end, in that the police create the block to stop him, who otherwise would keep driving on to San Francisco (and probably back again). The interruption of cause and effect, or more accurately, the spectator’s prior knowledge of the ending, provides a form of cinematic logic in the structure which indicates that although the road in road movies may seem straight it is seldom, straightforwardly linear.

The contrast between the depiction of speed in road movies such as *Vanishing Point* and Lynch’s use of slow motion at specific points in his films also highlights the technological interconnection between film and cars. The joyriding scene in *Blue Velvet* and the tailgating scene in *Lost Highway* are both examples where the manic psychic derangement of the drivers, Frank Booth and Dick Laurent respectively, is shown by the connection between speed and aggression. In *Blue Velvet* Frank drives Jeffrey out of town to the netherworld of

Deer Meadow where he is immolated and violently attacked. In *Lost Highway* it is significant that it is on Mulholland Drive that Dick Laurent loses control and attacks the tailgating driver in his super charged Mercedes. The potential danger of the car is thereby conjoined with machismo insecurity and violence in the way these characters respond to threats against their identity.



Failing to stop

The predetermined crash in *Vanishing Point* ends Kowalski's run from authority. In *Mulholland Drive* the initial crash allows Betty's dream fantasy to continue until it finally derails. In *Wild at Heart* as they drive towards Texas, Sailor and Lula also come upon a crash site, which begins with shots of white clothing strewn across the road, highlighted by the car's headlights. Chris Isaak's soundtrack music plays gently to accompany the scene. They stop to investigate and find, as Sailor puts it, "one bad car crash". They see the driver dead in front of the car and then a badly injured young woman (Sherilyn Fenn as Julie Day) stumbling around in shock, mumbling incessantly about losing her wallet. Initially they try to help her and plan to take her to a hospital but she dies in front of them. It is an unsettling scene, one of tragic pathos and appears as a strange diversion to the narrative trajectory. Lynch calls this one of his "eye-of-the-duck" scenes, which are not directly central to the story but which come at a specific, crucial, point in the narrative and help propel it forward towards the denouement⁷. Indeed, this scene leads them on into Big Tuna where Lula discovers she is pregnant, Bobby Peru forces her to say "fuck me" before walking out of the room, and then leads Sailor into a trap during a bank robbery in which Sailor is contracted to die but Peru ends up blowing his own head off. From here the end of their road journey is in sight as Sailor is captured and re-imprisoned.

Upon release, when he is met by Lula with their now four year old son, Sailor decides it would be better for them to split up. After walking off down the middle of a seemingly deserted road he is accosted by a gang of Spanish-Americans who he calls “faggots” and who, in response, beat him up. Lying prostrate on the floor, he has a vision of the good angel from *The Wizard of Oz* who tells him not to turn away from love. Realising his error, he runs over the top of a traffic jam to find Lula and Sailor Pace. He then lifts Lula onto the bonnet and sings “Love me Tender”, the song he had promised only to sing to his wife. As the credits roll he continues his singing, looking particularly ridiculous in his exaggeratedly artificial prosthetic nose. Here it is the traffic jam which provides for the film’s denouement. Gridlocked and stuck, Sailor can be reunited with Lula in a ridiculously kitsch ending.

But what can we make of the order of crashes in Lynch’s films, from the ones already mentioned through to the road-rage tailgating incident in *Mulholland Drive* and the one more straightforwardly “Lynchian” crash where a woman driver kills a deer in the otherwise clear stretch of highway in the linear progression of *The Straight Story*? To help with this task I would now like to look at Parveen Adams’s essay on David Cronenberg’s *Crash* (1997), a film (and a director) whose interests seem to be suitable to consider alongside Lynch’s road films. Adams (2003, p.157) reads *Crash* through Lacan’s work on Joyce in which, as she puts it, “Joyce puts his symptom in place by writing the *jouissance* of the signifier”. So how does Joyce do this and how does this relate to *Crash*? For Lacan, the sinthome enabled him to develop a theory of “a subject who is not psychotic and yet is *not* bounded by castration and the paternal metaphor, a subject who is, as it were, outwith – that is, outside – the Other” (Adams, 2003, p.148). This can happen because the bar in the barred subject comes to stand for the subject’s inscription rather than the subject of the signifier, and thereby can “sometimes come to authorize its own mark on the world” (Adams, 2003, p.149). By introducing the notion of the fault in the universe Lacan was able to redefine the symptom that

provides the necessary supplement that relates the three orders together. The sinthome is the fourth ring which holds the others together in a way in which, for all subjects, “the signifier also continues to appear in the real” (Adams, 2003, p.150), but which does not express the logic of the unconscious alone.

So, Lacan argues, Joyce was able to create a prosthetic ego in his writings and this is particularly clear in the case of the Joycean epiphanies. How does this relate to *Crash*? Adams (2003, p. 162) argues that “there is a collapse in the imaginary in *Crash*, the solution to which is of the order of the sinthome. For *Crash* equips the viewer with a prosthetic ego”. And that both Joyce and *Crash* work through a repetition of failure. So the supplement in the film, Adams (2003, p. 163) argues, is of the Joycean sinthome and not the psychotic symptom, and it is the viewer who provides this supplement via a prosthetic ego, which the film produces, and which bolts the subject in place. She also states that the cinematic moments of epiphany in the film revolve around enigmatic meaning and particularly the role of car crashes. As she puts it “The significance of the crash is reduced and emptied out, not only by the film but by us” (Adams 2003, p. 158). And this collapse in the imaginary and consequent lack of relation to the other is established through a form of doubling in which, she (2003, p. 160) argues, “The indifferent coupling redraws the boundaries of participants so that the situation can be expressed as a solitary relation”. Furthermore, that the scar in the film is a mark of pure inscription and is not the mark of castration (Adams, 2003, p. 161).



Crashing

How can we relate this discussion to Lynch's films? It does seem to me that if we transfer Adams's reading of *Crash* alongside Lynch's road films that we are probably talking of

different orders of symptom and representation, for Lynch appears to take the spectator to the edges of the cinematic representation without going beyond it. I do not think that there is a similar collapse of time and space in a non-psychotic manner in these films; rather that they work at the edges or borders of existing codes of representation. As such, the Möbius strip analogy seems more appropriate, certainly to *Lost Highway*. And so here we are at the end of the film, back where we started, but never quite in the same place, the ending is always different from the opening scenes, but we are unable to get off the highway. The same can be said of the closing sequence of *Blue Velvet*. Jeffrey and Sandy might be at home but their knowledge of the world has been irrevocably changed. Sailor and Lula might be reunited but we can never be sure that their future lives will be without further troubles. Alvin Straight might have made it to his brother's shack but how is he ever going to get back? But we know what happened to Betty. Her "crash" and suicide was foretold early on.

The highway in Lynch's films provides a framework for investigating life's journey metaphorically, and the relationship between these films and others that talk about the car and the movie business. The interrelationship between filmmaking, vehicles and the road provides for an aesthetic in which the "two incommensurable dimensions" Jameson (1993) discusses in respect of Chandler have a socio-historical importance of their own. For Lynch himself, it is interesting, I think, to consider how he is seeking to establish a greater degree of autonomy via his own website where the film business has less control. In the cinema we are perhaps destined to be stuck on the lost highway, but is there potential for a reinvigoration of spectatorship along another highway: the virtual superhighway? Perhaps, only time will tell, but it must be remembered that this technology is as inculcated in nineteenth century predecessors and warfare expertise as the celluloid predecessor. So, in a sense we are, perhaps, all stuck on an elusive highway looking for a way out.



Figure 41. Here we are again!



*Figure 42. **Flashing Red-*** A flashing red signal light means “STOP.” After stopping, you may proceed when it is safe. Observe the right-of-way rules.

Pierced by the Past: Filmic Trauma; Remembering and Forgetting

AL

(to Renee)

Do you own a video camera?

RENEE

No. Fred hates them.

The Detectives look at Fred.

FRED

I like to remember things my own way.

AL

What do you mean by that?

FRED

How *I* remember them. Not necessarily the way they happened.

(Lynch and Gifford, screenplay of *Lost Highway*, 1997, p.18)

SHE: I'll forget you! I'm forgetting you already! Look how I'm forgetting you! Look at me!

(Marguerite Duras' screenplay of *Hiroshima mon amour*, 1961, p.83)

Film and Trauma

It is not unusual for contemporary films to offer complex accounts of the workings of memory and identity in relation to trauma, and to invite viewers to become enmeshed in the mental condition of the films' protagonist. Having said that, I want to suggest that David Lynch's films occupy a privileged site in respect of these issues, and that they offer a rich source of materials through which we can consider how certain of these films, in particular, *Lost Highway* (1997) and *Mulholland Drive* (2001), provide for specific accounts of traumatic representation. In so doing, I will compare Lynch's work with European art film, via an

analysis of *Hiroshima mon amour* (Alain Resnais and Marguerite Duras, 1959); Hollywood B-Movies via a discussion of the *film noir*, *Detour* (Edgar G. Ulmer, 1945, also discussed in the previous chapter); and another contemporary example with *Memento* (Christopher Nolan, 2001). This will afford us the opportunity to consider how cinema has depicted trauma over approximately half of its history, and to ascertain what similarities or differences these various films construct in their treatment of such matters, across a range of cinematic fare, from the (edges of the) mainstream to the art house.

In all of these films the representation of trauma involves distinct temporal disjunctions to notions of classical Hollywood narrative linearity. In this chapter I want to look at the reasons for this increasingly popular fragmentation in narrative form. Is it, for example, purely a means by which contemporary filmmakers can reinvigorate “tired” narrative structures by using devices from experimental film and *film noir*? Or, does it mark a deeper shift and acknowledgement of cinema’s importance and role in being able to “deal” with trauma? Furthermore, what does this tell us about present-day spectatorship in which even mainstream audiences are attracted to such fare¹? Finally, what is the significance of Lynch’s films within the history of cinematic representations of trauma?

(Un)safe European Home²: ‘Hiroshima mon amour’

To begin this task I want to reflect upon European art cinema and its relationship to Lynch’s films and contemporary film making generally. In an essay published in 1990, Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier declared that:

For the spectator of 1959 who saw it what it first came out, seeing *Hiroshima mon amour* anew in the 1980s could jeopardize the memory of a film whose shock waves provoked more than one to refuse for more than 20 years to see it again. Viewed from this later perspective, however, it is impossible not to perceive *the film’s modernity displayed through its very obsolescence*: the theme of memory everywhere present in the action has become a commonplace convention; the anti-heroes whom we saw as free from psychological stereotypes have become the prototypes of the rising

intellectual bourgeoisie; even the narrative, with its pauses and ellipses, its vagaries and its open ending, declared the coming of a new narrative convention which would project the subjectivity of the characters through the representation of objects and places.

(Ropars-Wuilleumier, 1990, p.173, emphasis added)

To consider these points in more detail I would like to mull over a short scene from the film in which the juxtaposition of different temporal moments exist side by side in the depiction of the female character's traumatic past into her present love affair with the Japanese man. The scene comes the morning after the first time the French woman has slept with the man in Hiroshima. She is on the hotel roof drinking coffee and looking out onto the city below. She turns, walks back to the room and rests her body against the doorframe as she looks down onto her lover's sleeping body. He is lying on his front facing away from her while his right arm is twisted away from his body towards her. As she looks at him the fingers of his right hand twitch slightly as he dreams and then her face changes expression from one of happiness to intense sadness as she remembers, and the camera shows us brief images of her war time lover, the dead German soldier whose hand is shown in a similar position, and then we are presented with a shot of her kissing his bloodied face (see Figures 43 and 44). The viewer does not know at this stage the details of this relationship but the effect of his death upon her is clearly signified. The details of the relationship are subsequently revealed slowly throughout the diegesis, in particular, when she recounts her story in the Tea Room where her Japanese lover questions her and which thus allows her to piece together her memories and thus to forget in able to remember and symbolize, in some way, these events.



Figures 43 and 44. (Duras, 1961, pp.30-31)

Elizabeth Cowie (2000, p.191) argues that film “as a mode of representation ‘remembers’ trauma [and that] it does so by instituting a forgetting which enables trauma to pass into memory and thus some level of resolution”. Furthermore, in relation to the films she reads, (*Hiroshima mon amour* and a silent documentary film about “shell-shocked” soldiers in the First World War entitled *War Neurosis, Netley 1917 and Seale Hayne Military Hospital, 1918*), that “What is presented in each film is a traumatic forgetting which thereby also traces for the spectator a remembering of trauma-as-unrepresentable” (Cowie, 2000, p.193).

Both of the French woman’s relationships involve love affairs caught up in the trauma of history – the Second World War and its devastating “ending” via the atomic bombing of Hiroshima (and Nagasaki) – while the extraordinary prologue to the film links together images of the bombing of Hiroshima and its aftermath with her second love affair in a way which, as Cowie (2000, p.199) points out, suggests that the relationship between her war time life in Nevers and Hiroshima is shockingly one of death and desire. What can be known by her or us of Hiroshima? As he says, “You say nothing in Hiroshima, Nothing”. And even though we are presented with images of the hospital, and the museum, there is a strong sense in which we

indeed see nothing of Hiroshima; that as an event, even though it is manifestly public, it is also obscenely “unknowable”, but that:

To become (hi)story, however, it must be narrated, given a logic of cause and effect, in sum, it must become meaning(ful). It must change, that is, from the ‘flashback’ – in the sense used for the mental flashbacks experienced by trauma victims – to the flashback of classical cinema (on which the former sense is based), firmly secured within a film’s causal narrative structure.

(Cowie, 2000, p.196)

But, in relation to her (private) past, it, in its fictional “reality”, can be shown:

The belatedness of trauma here concerns not the event but the ‘understanding’ of the event, that is, the unconscious apprehension of the shock which sets in train processes of detranslation and retranslation of earlier, enigmatic and thus traumatic, messages. The trauma of the love story of Nevers involves not only loss, but loss as punishment for transgressive desire, and insofar as desire is necessarily transgressive, this losing is a punishment for desire. The trauma is not, then, the loss of her German soldier-lover but the intrusion of an arbitrary power which denies *jouissance* to her. By the narration of her trauma the French-woman – and her Japanese lover as interlocuter and we as spectators – become engaged in a process of traumatic remembering and forgetting.

(Cowie, 2000, p.201)

Cowie (2000, p.192) utilizes Jean Laplanche’s phrase “enigmatic message” as a term to designate that “which intrudes or penetrates – ‘seducing’ – the child, which produces trauma”. This “seduction without meaning” and thereby “senselessness” is what produces trauma. And film appears to be ontologically privileged as a medium to “show” or work with representations of these “enigmatic messages”. In *Hiroshima mon amour* flashbacks are used to show the French woman’s past but these are not subjective point of view shots. Instead, the spectator is shown the events as if an observer were looking onto the meetings between the French woman and her German lover. And, in this way, the spectator is perhaps put into the place of both the woman herself in an attempt to “know” her trauma via a form of forgetting and therefore retranslation, and the inhabitants of Nevers who might have become aware of her relationship as onlookers to her illicit meetings. For her trauma is such that she can

remember only by forgetting parts of her memories thereby distancing herself from the acutely painful recollections of the actual events. So, for instance, the viewer is presented with shots of her running to meet her lover in various trysting places as if watching from afar. Similarly, we are given shots of the garden from where he is shot although we never see the perpetrator. Indeed, this location marks, for her and for us, the point of the unseen but constantly felt malevolent gaze that watches all without being seen, and is the point from where she is punished for her transgressive *jouissance*. So the spectator is presented with her revised recollections of the wartime affair as a means of reinforcing what Cowie refers to as a remembering of trauma as unrepresentable, but which is symbolized in a reformed fashion by this process of forgetting in order to remember.

In *Lost Highway* the viewer is presented with images from Fred Madison's dream, as I will discuss later on, in which we see Renee lifting her hands in horror as she is about to be attacked (Figure 45), while in his recounting of the dream Fred says "Then there you were...lying in bed...but it wasn't you...It *looked* like you...but it wasn't" (Lynch and Gifford, 1997, p.13). The disparity between Fred's words and Renee's look of fear thereby provides the spectator with a cinematic equivalence of the disassociation between Fred's murderous thoughts and acts and his inability/unwillingness to accept responsibility for these actions, and which presents the viewer with a similar split between knowledge and belief.



Figure 45. Fred's dream, Renee's nightmare. *Lost Highway* (Hartmann, 2004)

In her book on flashbacks in film, Maureen Turim (1989, p.212) analyzes the brief rooftop scene from *Hiroshima mon amour* and points out that "It hangs, alone, unremarked

upon by another character's recognition that it constitutes a sign. It is therefore a far more disruptive trace of a new and different mode of *écriture*". For Turim, modernist film has direct links to modernist literary forms in the way in which flashbacks are used and which distinguish the modernist film from more mainstream usage of the flashback. In relation to this scene she points out that the focalization used is clearly that of the female character, as we are presented with the graphically matched shots of the two hands and then the shot of her kissing the dead and bloodied mouth of the soldier. As the scene is so brief, and elliptically presented, the full realization of what is shown can only become apparent in the subsequent flashbacks when the viewer is given further information about the affair and its aftermath, and like the female character, can piece together the fractured and fragmented narrative. She goes on to make a more general point about the use of modernist flashbacks by stating that "This tendency towards a style that works on repetition and reference without redundancy of coding, especially as concerns verbal cementing of signifieds to signifiers, constitutes the spectator as participant in the production of the text" (Turim, 1989, p.214). The spectator is presented or provided with certain narrative information and a specific form of narration which parallels, to some degree, the French woman's (in)ability to symbolize her past as a means for it to be forgotten and thence remembered, so that it can be incorporated into her story. At the same time the political events of Hiroshima remain, to some degree, outside of the same form of remembering, and are presented to the spectator in the astonishing form of the prologue images and sounds, which present these events in the form of an ellipsis.

The modernist flashback is, therefore, the main device used in the film to represent her forgetting in order to "remember" the trauma of her illicit wartime relationship, while the public horror of Hiroshima remains, in some ways, outside the same degree of resolution, and is therefore unknowable to her and to the spectator and cannot, therefore, be forgotten in the same way in order to be incorporated into memory. The film offers a means by which private

and public traumas can be discussed poetically, and thereby offers a form of resolution to seemingly incompatible events, by which they can be narrated into a form of understanding.

Love hurts, jealousy kills: 'Lost Highway'

I now want to consider Lynch's treatment of trauma by reference to *Lost Highway* to see what structures are in play here and whether there is any connection to those discussed above in relation to *Hiroshima mon amour*. The first scene I want to look at is where Fred recounts his dream which occurs the night after he played the saxophone in the Luna Lounge. It takes place in Fred and Renee's bedroom and begins with a camera shot which progresses along and around the dark, draped, interior passageway of the house, and then dissolves to a close-up of Fred lying in bed. There is then a cut to him playing the saxophone in the club, which cuts back to a shot of Fred and his point of view of Renee and Andy walking out of the club in which the camera tilts up to show a red neon sign reading "Exit". Exit for whom? The question is did this event actually occur or is it Fred's hallucination? For the viewers were told that Renee did not go to the club that night but stayed at home to read. We also know that Fred did not believe her and that when he tried to call the house there was no response, although Renee later claimed to have been asleep, and was indeed in bed sleeping when he returned. So the chances are that Fred is imagining this scene to provide him with a "motive" to concoct a reason for murdering Renee, or that it occurred at some other time in the past.

The camera then cuts to Renee who, standing by the bed, takes off her dressing gown and stands naked side on to the bed before briefly going into the en-suite bathroom and then she climbs into bed alongside Fred. Both bodies are then filmed from above as they lie separately on their backs. They then look at each other as he leans towards her and they kiss. Fred then climbs onto her and starts to make love, if that term is appropriate in this context. Renee's eyes remain open and fixed on Fred as she dispassionately watches him throughout his brief, tense and unreciprocated sexual encounter, which seems to offer neither of them, but

particularly him, little pleasure. During this act there is a shot of blinding white light prior to the action moving into slow motion. Aurally the act is accompanied by the slow disturbing rumble of the soundtrack which segues into a very quiet introduction This Mortal Coil's version of Tim Buckley's 'Song for a Siren'. This track is reprised towards the end of the film when Pete is no longer able to sustain his fantasy alter ego and once again "becomes" Fred after he makes love to Alice in the desert. During this latter lovemaking scene Pete keeps repeating "I want you...I want you" to which Alice replies in his ear "You'll *never* have me" and which reinforces the impossibility of the sexual relationship (see Chapter 4 for more on this).

As soon as Fred comes he sinks onto her body and the camera, from a low angle by the side of the bed, provides an extreme close-up of his left eye, and then cuts to a shot of his muscled back as Renee's hand, with its carefully manicured and black painted nails, moves onto his shoulder. The viewer is then presented with alternating shots of the extreme close-up of Fred's eye and Renee's hand on his back as she pats him and, just about audibly over the soundtrack, whispers to him "There's a good boy. It's OK. There's a good boy". As she does so we seem Fred's response which is one of intense anger, and is backed up by parallel soundtrack effects. Fred pulls away to his side of the bed, and turning away from Renee says, almost vengefully, "I had a dream about you last night".

The relationship between the shots of Fred's eye and Renee's hand upon his back seems to me to be crucial to an understanding, not only of this scene, but, I would argue, the entire structure of *Lost Highway*. The effect of Renee's hand patting his back is to jolt Fred into a sense of recognition or remembrance of some other scene or memory. This is never explained to us, but this simple, seemingly caring gesture, but which is read very differently by him, acts as a catalyst for Fred's future actions. The filmed version of these events gives a much more detailed account than the screenplay does. In the latter it is baldly stated that:

He makes love to her voraciously, but her lack of passion disturbs him. Fred can't stop, however, and when he comes she acts consolingly, stroking him maternally while he calms down. He climbs off her and retreats to his side of the bed.

CLOSE-UP: *Fred's eyes – which express his horror and humiliation.*

(Lynch and Gifford, 1997, p.12)

The key word in this description for me is “maternally”. The feeling of the hand as it gently touches Fred’s back appears to instigate his recollection of his “murderous” dream, in which he was looking from Renee who called out his name. When he finds her, in his recounted dream, in the bedroom he says “Then there you were...lying in bed...but it wasn’t you...It *looked* like you...but it wasn’t”. As the camera shows us Fred’s dream we see Renee in bed lifting up her hands in fear as the camera, in the position of Fred, “dives violently” at her, as a prefigurement of her future murder (Figure 45). The spectator “knows” that this was indeed Renee in the dream. The recounted dream, coming temporally prior to the actual murder actually presents the murder, from which Fred tries to distance himself by firstly seeking to deny that it is/was Renee in bed, and later by “becoming” Pete Drayton.

Fred’s reaction to Renee’s hand upon his back reminds me of Freud’s (1979. p.317) comment in the Wolf Man case that “a repression is very different from a rejection”. For what is it that is (re)activated in Fred’s mind at this point in the film? Interestingly, after he has recounted his dream he looks towards Renee but sees the Mystery Man’s face transposed over her face. The screenplay states “It’s a face Fred has never seen before” (Lynch and Gifford, 1997, p.13). In fear he briefly turns away then looks again but this time he does see Renee. (Figures 46 and 47).



Figures 46 and 47. (Hartmann, 2004)

The looped narrative structure of *Lost Highway* plays with, and undermines, the concept of linear time and classical narrative conventions, and appears to echo Freud's concept of deferred action (*Nachträglichkeit*) in relation to psychical temporality in which, as J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis (1973, p.112) write: "a subject revises past events at a later date (*nachträglichkeit*), and that it is this revision which invests them with significance and even with efficacy or pathogenic force". They go on to state that "It is not lived experience in general that undergoes a deferred revision, but, specifically, whatever it has been impossible on the first instance to incorporate fully into a meaningful context. The traumatic event is the epitome of such unassimilated experience" (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1973, p.112)³.

The origins of the theory of deferred action can be traced back to Freud's pre-analytic writings. As early as 6 December 1896 he wrote to Wilhelm Fliess that:

As you know, I am working on the assumption that our psychical mechanism has come into being by a process of stratification: the material present in the form of memory-traces being subjected from time to time by a *re-arrangement* in accordance with fresh circumstances – to a *re-transcription*. Thus what is essentially new about my theory is that memory is present not once but several times over, that it is laid down in various species of indications.

(Freud, 2001, p.233)

The theory had been expounded in further detail in the ‘Project for a Scientific Psychology’ (1959 [1895]). This early, neurological paper, although left abandoned, set out the theory which, in one form or another, continued throughout his career. So, although Freud repudiated this neurological approach, and indeed tried to destroy it, references to it appear throughout most of his subsequent psychoanalytical writings. Indeed, the editor’s introduction to the Standard Edition makes the point that “in fact the *Project*, or rather its invisible ghost haunts the whole series of Freud’s theoretical writings to the end” (Freud, 2001, p.290).

The metaphors of haunting and ghosts strike me as delightfully apposite in relation to our analysis of film, and in particular Lynch’s output such as *Lost Highway* where characters are indeed haunted by trauma. The nature of film itself, the dancing play of shadows on a white screen, and its impact upon the spectator, is one in which the depictions of trauma can be explored and played out in ways that, perhaps, ontologically inhere in the cinematic *dispositif*.

Moving on from the bedroom scene we are shown a party at Andy’s house. Here, during what appears to be a glamorous occasion full of beautiful people, Fred sees the Mystery Man enter the room and make for him to enter into conversation (Figure 48).

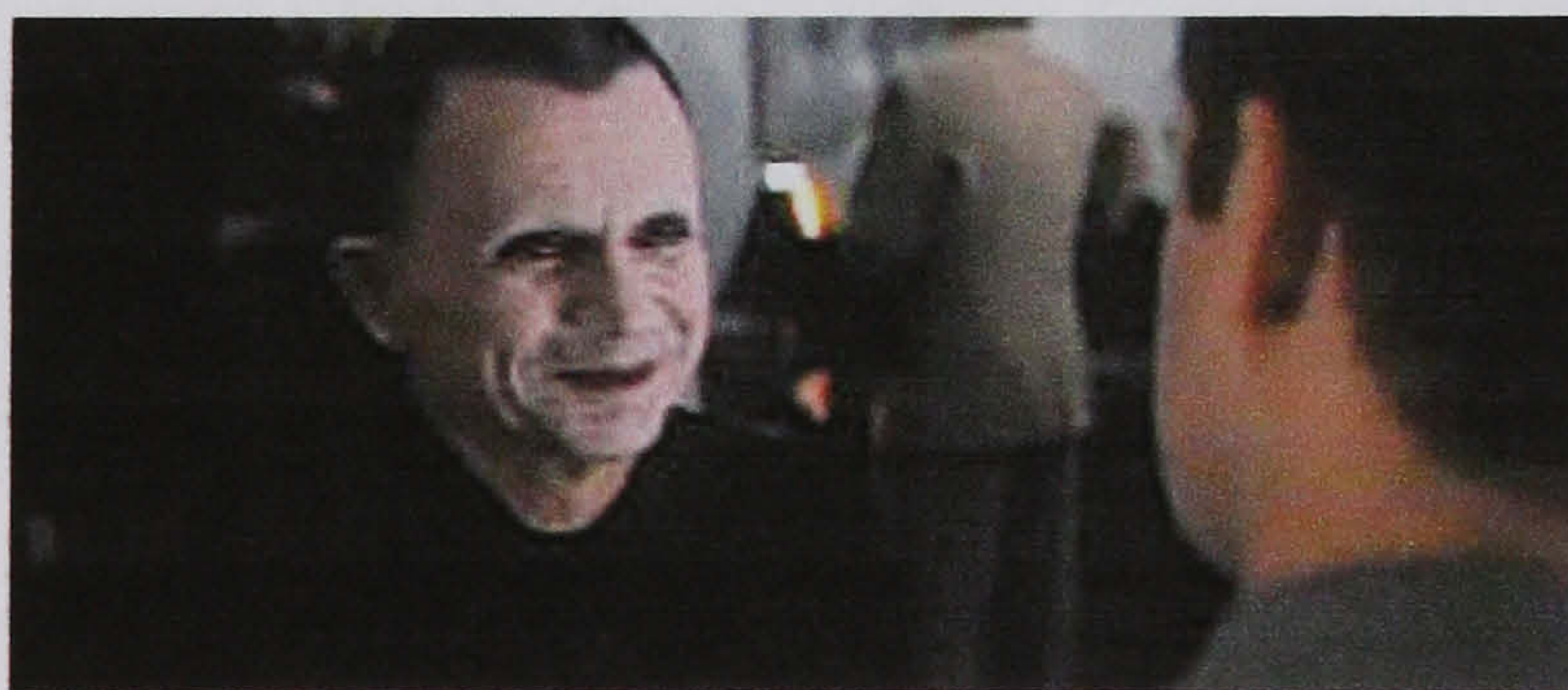


Figure 48. Fred meets the Mystery Man. (Hartmann, 2004)

During their conversation the Mystery Man tells Fred that they've met before at Fred's house, and that he, the Mystery Man, is there now. He gets Fred to call home and the Mystery Man's voice comes on the line responding to Fred's question as to how he got into the house, telling him that "You invited me. It's not my habit to go where I'm not wanted". Rather than present images of the Mystery Man in the house the viewer hears only his voice at one and the same time that he stands before Fred at the party. The disembodied sound of the voice on the telephone while the Mystery Man silently watches Fred's response and the dual laugh are uncanny and presents a very different order of temporality and spatial arrangement to that of the flashbacks in *Hiroshima mon Amour*. The emanations of Fred's unconscious are made manifest in the figure of the Mystery Man who is ostensibly a friend of Dick Laurent and who later helps Fred to kill him. Dick Laurent acts as the father of perverse enjoyment, who regulates, in his obscene injunctions, *jouissance*. Naturally Fred has to keep coming up against him, and ultimately kill him, but this offers no way out, because Fred is not able to take up Dick Laurent's position of phallic authority: there is no other of the Other⁴. After the Mystery Man walks away Fred asks Andy who the man is, and upon being told that he is a friend of Dick Laurent he replies "But Dick Laurent is dead, isn't he?" Fred seems confused by his knowledge, which he heard at the beginning of the film through the intercom and which he repeats into it at the end of the film after he, in the company of the Mystery Man, kills Dick Laurent/Mr. Eddy.

After talking to the Mystery Man Fred is understandably disturbed and he grabs Renee and leaves the party hurriedly to return home. In so doing, in returning to the scene of his future crime, he can only repeat or live out his murderous dream as a form of repetition compulsion from which he cannot escape but is compelled to act out that dream. As their car stops on the pavement outside the house we see shots of light and shadows inside at first floor level. Fred goes in alone to investigate and appears to see someone or something in the house, but we do not see what he does, although the camera and hence the spectator, is in the position

of what it is that Fred “sees” or senses, but which the spectator cannot. This can be read, I think, as the integration of his murderous thoughts which are diegetically externalized in the Mystery Man, but which are, in fact, emanations of his unconscious. These scenes of Fred with the Mystery Man textually present the spectator with a lack of narrative cohesion, which places the viewer in an unsettling position, from where it is difficult to ascertain any clear sense of spectatorial distance or narrative understanding of the events.

The following shots show us Fred getting up the next day and collecting another envelope containing a video from the front steps. As he watches it, he sees himself sitting next to Renee’s butchered corpse, with blood everywhere. Viewing the grainy black and white footage of the video it is hard to tell if the figure is indeed Fred, and even though the film stock turns briefly to colour this does not really assist the viewer in ascertaining the truth of the image (Figure 49).



Figures 49. The scene of the crime shown briefly in colour. (Hartmann, 2004)

The screenplay, however, confirms that it is:

Blood is scattered over the floor, bed, walls. The camera drifts. The dead body of Renee lies on the floor at the foot of the bed. She is badly mutilated. Fred is hovering above her on the tape, on his knees, a horrified, unbelieving expression on his face. On the tape, Fred turns away from Renee – his hands raised dripping blood – her blood. His movements are almost mechanical, constricted, as he strains strangely upwards, seemingly against his will, as if feeling some enormous pressure. He looks directly at the camera, his face a ghostly grimace, contorted, just before the taped image goes to snow.

(Lynch and Gifford, 1997, p.33)

I have watched this section of the film in detail many times, stopping the image of the murder when the screen momentarily changes to colour and it is still extremely hard to make out whether it really is Fred in the frame. What strikes me about this is Fred's hair at this point. No longer swept back from his face, as in the rest of the film, his side parting jolts or takes my concentration away from the horror of the scene, as a punctum in the rush to "see" the overall studium, but which constantly interrupts that enthusiasm to know what has happened in the depicted scene. The rush to see the image, to confirm knowledge against the grainy video effect, always confounds my desire to be certain that it is Fred by Renee's side. Even though the screenplay makes it apparent that it is he, this uncertainty appears to me as a necessary component of the spectator's engagement with the film. The desire to know for certain that Fred is the murderer is confounded by the use of the video footage and the brevity of the colour shot as well as the conciseness of the overall scene. As such the spectatorial position is akin to Fred's as he then seeks to disavow his certain knowledge that he killed Renee.

Indeed, what the images from the film and the screenplay suggest is that the archive does not provide the "truth" of the scene and that even with written evidence the viewer is still unable to confirm fully the facts. In temporal terms the scene comes after the dream, but the dream was one in which the murder actually happened. The use of different film stocks provides for subjective shifts in emphasis, to offer a grainy interpretation of Fred's mental state, as well as for temporal shifts in which the events depicted occur at different levels of the narration, so that any certainty about the sequence of events is constantly undermined. (And later, in the desert, we do see the Mystery Man with the video camera in his hand which indicates that it was "he" who filmed the house earlier in the film.)

Fred's inability to face up to his actions leads to his fantasmatic shift into the character of Pete Drayton while in prison awaiting execution in the electric chair. The traumatic effect

of his actions is just too much for him to bear and he enacts a new fantasy scenario as a way to disavow the horror of the brutal murder of Renee. Although it is the murder that is traumatic, it only becomes so after the event, by deferred action. As Laplanche and Pontalis (1973, p.467) put it, “it is only *as a memory* that the first scene becomes pathogenic by deferred action, in so far as it sparks off an influx of internal excitation”.

Trauma, as a wound or piercing, as its etymology suggests, breaks through the defences which are unable to with stand the excitation brought about by the immensity of the wound. Lacan’s development of Freud’s concept, termed by him *après-coup*, extends the analysis to assess how time fits into the traumatic scenario, and the subject’s continuing inability to incorporate the state of affairs into its history. In his discussion of the Wolf Man case Lacan points out that:

In the first place, in spite of the whole cluster of proofs demonstrating the historicity of the primal scene, in spite of the conviction that he shows concerning it – remaining imperturbable to the doubts that Freud methodically cast on it in order to test him – the Wolf Man never managed in spite of it all to integrate his recollection of the primal scene into his history.

(Lacan, 1977, p.960)

Reading the Wolf Man case is, in itself, a fascinating account of temporal disjunctions, similar to the workings of film narration, in that, even accounting for Freud’s clear style, I still find it difficult to follow the chain of events. I always have to refer to the footnote at the end of the piece (Freud, 1979l p.365. note 1) to search out a chronological account of the various sections of the Wolf Man’s history. Yet, reading the account I become confused, and have difficulty in maintaining any clear sequential details of the events, and this is similar to my experience of watching *Lost Highway*. Indeed, it would be fair to say that cinema haunts my reading of Freud, that even with multiple viewings of the fixed cinematic text of *Lost Highway* my confusion never clears. Likewise, as Lacan states, the Wolf Man could never fully

integrate the primal scene or fantasy into his history; it remained outside of being fully symbolized. And reading the case it stands out as an episode in his treatment, which may have been a remembrance of actual intercourse between his parents, or a fantasy arising from seeing animals copulate which he then transferred onto his parents. As Freud (1979, p.351) puts it, “the dream brought into deferred operation his observation of intercourse at the age of one and a half”, with this latter dream reactivating an earlier one which, up to that point, had not taken on efficacy in the patient’s psyche.

The contemporary psychoanalyst André Green (2002, p.21) remarks, in relation to this case, that “The notion of *après-coup* (*Nachträglichkeit*) raises the question of knowing what the earlier anticipatory event, ‘*l’avant-coup*’, so to speak, might have been”. And the same can be applied to *Lost Highway*. What might that anticipatory event have been? The viewer is provided with Fred’s point of view shots of Renee and Andy together leaving the club, but we cannot be sure that this event actually occurred. Green (2002, p.1) puts forward the notion of “shattered time” to deal with “a notion of time which has very little to do with the idea of an orderly succession according to the tripartition past/present/future”. One of his aims is to bring back into psychoanalytic discourse the multiplicity of viewpoints about time that Freud envisaged, and to develop theoretical work on the subject which, Green argues, has been relegated to work on space. And what he confirms is that “what is traumatic is not the raw event, but the re-awakening of an earlier incident which was believed to be finished with or over” (Green, 2002, p.23). He goes on to say that dreams provide privileged access to a wealth of materials which would not be as richly available to us in every day life, “nor at such combinations which only art is able to achieve outside the realm of dreams” (Green, 2002, p.37). This point seems to me to be of great relevance in relation to film, and in particular, those films I am working on here. For art “thinks” or, as Freud termed it in relation to dreams, “transforms” (see Green, 2000, p.12) a wealth of information to re-activate scenes of trauma, to permit some form of forgetting and remembering in the viewer. And the

particularity of film is that this process, or object of cinema, permits access to images, sounds and word-presentations that are usually found in dreams.

The sounds of trauma: 'Detour'

Interestingly, in *Lost Highway* it is music that “wounds” Pete Drayton when he hears the discordant jazz played by Fred on the radio in the garage (see Chapter 4). The wild, improvised music pierces his fantasmatic, protective shell. Similarly, in *Hiroshima mon amour* it is when the two lovers are talking in the tearoom and music is played on the jukebox that she screams out “Oh, how young I was once!” as the sounds break through her protective shell to reactivate the trauma of her earlier love affair.

At the outset of the 1955 B-Movie, *Detour*, it is the music playing on the jukebox in the diner that sets in train Al Robert’s recounting of his predicament. Another customer goes to the jukebox and chooses the tune that Al used to play as a pianist in a nightclub in New York, *I Can’t Believe that you’re in love with Me*. Al’s voice-over states:

Did you ever want to forget anything? Did you ever want to cut away a piece of your memory and blot it out? You can’t you know, no matter how hard you try. You can change the scenery, but sooner or later you’ll get a whiff of perfume, or someone will say a certain phrase, or maybe hum something, then you’ll live again.

The narrative structure of this film also echoes that of *Lost Highway* as it loops around the protagonist’s trouble with its many temporal shifts. Al Roberts becomes immersed in a waking nightmare in his cross-country search for Sue, his girlfriend who had set out for Los Angeles ahead of him. Instead he meets the *femme fatale*, Vera who, like Renee, will be killed, although in the former case her death is presented as a tragic accident. However, in *Lost Highway*, the psychotic nature of Fred’s fantasy puts the viewer into his confused state,

whereas in *Detour* these events are narrated to the viewer as an onlooker to the fate-driven spiral of destructive violence which Al cannot escape.

Maureen Turim points out that there are two kinds of flashbacks used in *film noir*. The first she designates as the investigative structure in which the past is examined to solve a crime. The second form she refers to as the confessional flashback which is “characterized by the protagonist’s retrospective examination of the ways in which he was introduced into his current criminality” (Turim, 1989, p.172) and *Detour* presents the viewer with this second type of flashback. The flashback tropes of the original *noirs* to which Turim refers are obviously forerunners of Lynch’s *noirs*, but in *Lost Highway* we are not so much presented with images of Fred’s point of view as enmeshed in his mental condition. So his trauma becomes, in a cinematic sense, ours, and is unknowable to us as well as to him. And the incorporation of the spectator with the film’s central character thereby links European art cinema to *film noir*, and shows how avant-garde ideas and techniques are intertwined in Lynch’s films.

Picture this: ‘Memento’

The investigation of trauma or other memory conditions such as amnesia, common themes from the original *film noir* cycle, have been reintroduced in several contemporary *noirs*. For example, in Christopher Nolan’s *Memento* (2000) the viewer experiences Leonard Shelby’s inability to retain short-term memory by the disjointed backwards narration experienced by him and witnessed by us. For example, when we are first shown him meeting a bruised Natalie in a diner she asks him to remember his wife. The viewer is presented with Leonard’s memories of her; glimpses of his life with her prior to her murder. These images break through the protective shield Leonard has constructed to create meaning in his life and guide his subsequent actions after his wife’s murder. Interspersed with these portions of the film are other shot in black and white, which follow a linear trajectory. These sections, which employ

many of the standard tropes of *noir*, such as fractured low-key lighting and a voice-over, appear to anchor some meaning which the majority of the film seeks to thwart. However, we can never be sure that Leonard's memories are ever accurate, and he is therefore an unreliable narrator. Indeed, at the close of the film, Teddy, the police officer who has accompanied Leonard throughout, makes the point that Sammy Jankis, the case Leonard always refers to in his distinction between habit and routine, did not have a wife and that it was Leonard's wife who was diabetic. The inference drawn is that it was Leonard's wife who died by insulin injections administered by Leonard. Furthermore, the spectator is kept in confusion by the events being presented in reverse chronology, so that it becomes extremely difficult to follow their "correct" sequence, thereby giving a sense of the way in which Leonard seeks to order his world. The relationship between Leonard's trauma and subsequent actions becomes one in which it is increasingly difficult to disentangle.

As Anna Kornbluh (2004, p.131. See Figures 50 and 51) remarks, Leonard Shelby has to construct an elaborate system of notes, photographs and tattoos on his body "to organize his daily re-entrance into reality and familiarize himself with his progress in the search for the killer."

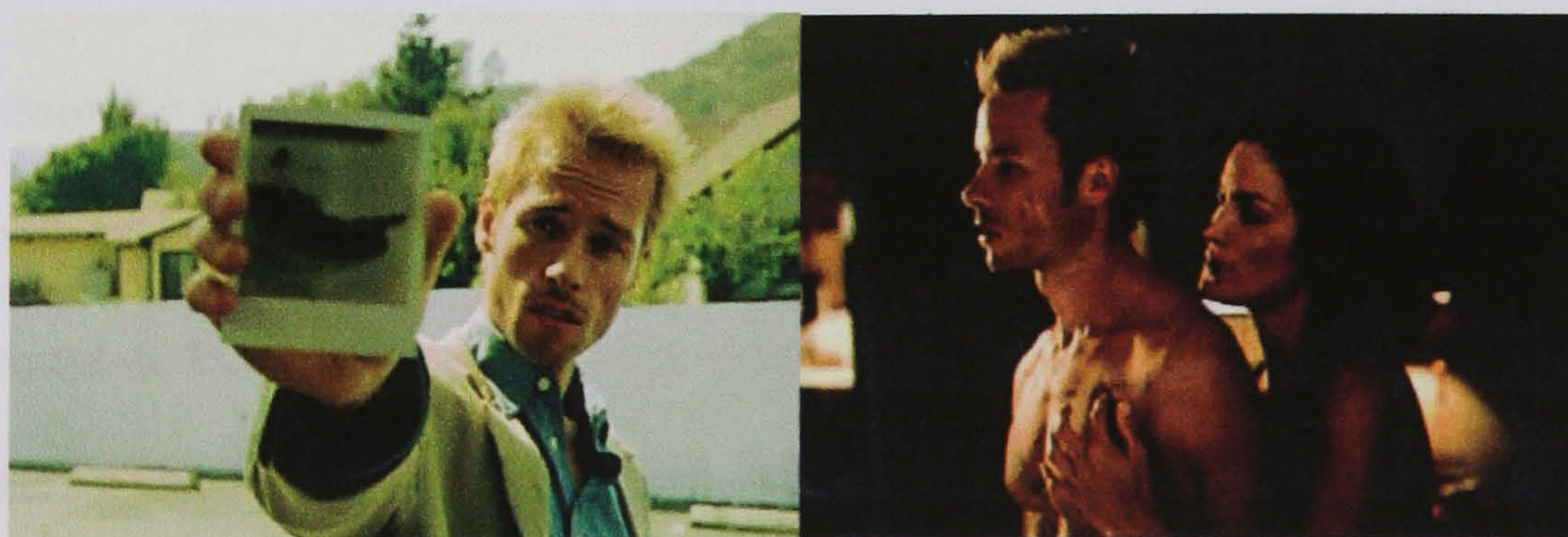


Figure 50. Leonard's Polaroid 'evidence' Figure 51. Evidence written on the body

Leonard's "condition", in which he has lost all short-term memory, means that he has to record all of his "evidence" in calligraphic or photographic media in his quest to avenge his wife's rape and murder. Kornbluh (2004, p.132) argues that the murder is, in fact, the

secondary trauma and that “it is *fundamentally irrelevant* whether he [Leonard] killed his wife, because *that* trauma is insignificant”. The real trauma lies in an ambiguous scene in which Leonard decides to make himself forget and writes a new instruction on the back of Teddy’s photograph saying “Don’t believe his lies”. By doing so she suggests that “Leonard forces himself to forget (what may or may not) be the truth, since it is only in his ‘condition’ of nonmemory that he can maintain the framework that gives his life meaning: the search for the Killer (Kornbluh, 2004, p.133). So the actual trauma is Leonard’s forgetting in which he can “constitute” meaning in his life, while the death of his wife is secondary to his fantasy or primal repression in which fantasy is on the side of reality and not just a protective screen. She argues that the way the film does this is through a different use of cinematic flashback to standard Hollywood flashback narratives in which we never find out the details of the actual murder, although we are given glimpses of it the “truth” is never revealed. As she states:

the film self-consciously relies upon conventional climactic formal structure in order to locate its own most important substantive point (the scene of choice). The film therefore deconstructs itself *from within*, mobilizing in the spectator the desire not only impossible to fulfill, but *false*, and as such, *irrelevant*. It is as if the spectator is forced to experience form within the disintegration of an ideological universe: the film’s texture undermines its own explicit project.

(Kornbluh, 2004, p.135)

Whereas in *Detour* the narrative does take us back to the origins of Al Robert’s plight and then diegetically gives us a linear path through the sequence of events that have resulted in his entrapment through to his eventual capture. However, in *Memento* we never find out the “truth” of the actual murder and the spectator is kept in a state of heightened suspense without narrative closure. The same is true of *Lost Highway*, the spectator leaves Fred/us frantically driving down his/our own lost (psychic) highway, without a clear end in sight. Although the screenplay might clearly show us Fred beside his murdered wife, the film text itself leaves the viewer enmeshed in “darkness and confusion”⁶.

Blind desire: 'Mulholland Drive'

In *Mulholland Drive* Betty and Rita discover the dead body of Diane when they are investigating Rita's identity. It is a scene that bears comparison with the murder of Renee in *Lost Highway*, for, as Todd McGowan (2004, p.80) points out, "Because they are within the fantasy and perceiving it through its lens, Betty and Rita cannot recognize the body as Diane's (and neither can we as spectators)". McGowan's thesis is that the film creates a divide between fantasy and desire so that, while it disguises the Lacanian Real, it also offers a privileged path to it. As such, *Mulholland Drive* can be read as a companion film to *Lost Highway* in that the former explores the structure of fantasy and desire in relation to female subjectivity, whilst *Lost Highway* does the same in relation to male subjectivity. In both films a rigid divide is created between fantasy and desire, but which McGowan argues, is made even more explicit in *Mulholland Drive*.

While both films are divided into two sections, *Mulholland Drive* presents the initial depiction as if from Rita's fantasy, while the spectator may or may not come to understand that it is actually Diane's fantasy all along. The first part of the film is therefore retrospectively known to be coded as Diane's fantasy, while the shorter second part is the ontologically different world of Diane's desire. As McGowan says:

Because Lynch avoids blending together the levels of fantasy and desire, he is able to join them together in a way that reveals the traumatic Real that exists at their point of intersection. The intersection of fantasy and desire is always a point of trauma because it is a point at which signification breaks down.
(McGowan, 2004, p.80)

In the world of desire Diane has Camilla killed, but in the world of fantasy she can remake her as Rita, even creating her as "Diane's own ideal-ego" (McGowan, 2004, p.71. See Figure 52), which reminds me of *Vertigo* in which Scottie "remakes" Judy into a fantasy of Madeleine, to

repeat what has already been done, and which will inevitably repeat itself again in Judy's death at the tower. Similarly, Diane cannot sustain her fantasy projection, because in the world of desire she has already organized Camilla's death. McGowan and other commentators have pointed out that, by keeping fantasy and desire separate, Lynch pushes fantasy much further than most Hollywood films, which imply fantasy scenarios but which eventually pull back from following fantasy through to its (ill)logical conclusion.



Figure 52. Remade in her own image (cosmopolis, 2005)

Within Lacanian film theory there is a renewed emphasis in the register of the Real. Part of this renewed emphasis seems to derive from the dialectical engagement with “Post-Theory” referred to in the introductory chapter, as well as from an attempt to rectify what are considered by several contemporary film theorists to be the mistakes of the application of Lacan's work to film theory in the 1960s and 1970s. This is an appropriate point at which to consider where Lacanian film theory is now, and how this, and other psychoanalytical models, may be used to investigate such films as *Lost Highway* and *Mulholland Drive* and their treatment of trauma.

The collection of essays in *Lacan and Contemporary Film* (2004) provides readings of a variety of contemporary films including Anna Kornbluh's essay on *The Family Man* and *Memento* cited earlier. In their introduction to the collection the editors, Todd McGowan and

Sheila Kunkle (2004, p.xiii), argue that film theory's use of Lacan in the 1960s and 1970s had relied on a narrow use of his work. In particular, too much emphasis was placed on the mirror stage and the category of the imaginary at the expense of the "near-total exclusion of the Real". In contrast, the essays in their collection focus on the category of the Real and the gap in the symbolic that arises where the symbolic fails. And, as such, the contributors look at the ways in which the ideological dimension of film "lies in its ability to offer a fantasy scenario that delivers us from a traumatic Real" (McGowan and Kunkle, 2004, p.xviii).

In addition to this the editors also argue that previous uses of Lacan's work in film theory had resulted in undue emphasis being placed on spectatorship, whereas their collection of essays concentrate on the filmic text itself, which incorporates an analysis of the text and the reception that each text calls for from the spectator, so that text and spectator cannot be separated out. So, as they go on to state, "psychoanalytic interpretation involves isolating the traumatic Real through its effects within the text" (McGowan and Kunkle, 2004, p.xxii). They link this mode of interpretation to Lacan's use of formalization to suggest that the contemporary subject is facing a changing psychic reality in which film can be regarded "as a privileged site at which we constitute new desires, experiment with unhinging our fundamental fantasies, and imagine ways to resist the power of ideology" (McGowan and Kunkle, 2004, p.xxviii).

By using this contemporary re-evaluation of Lacan's work on film I would now like to go back to *Mulholland Drive* to extend the previous reading of the film, this time by reference to the lesbian relationship between Diane/Betty and Camilla/Rita as a means of seeking to uncover what these representations might tell us about these figures, and their relationship to the tragedy of contemporary trauma.

For Heather K. Love (2004, p.125) Lynch's film explores the clichés of lesbian representation by combining the two most dominant ideas of lesbians in our culture(s). These are firstly, the romance between Betty and Rita in which lesbianism is presented as innocent

and expansive, while the second, the story of Diane and Camilla, presents the classic lesbian triangle where Diane is the tragic lesbian who is destined to lose her lover to a man. She reads the two sex scenes in the film as examples of these different representations. In the first scene Betty and Rita make love successfully and there is a sense, as Love (2004, p.127) puts it, of “a kind of utopian plenitude in the midst of this more or less predictable scene”. In the second scene, which takes place in Diane’s “real” world there is a failed erotic encounter, which begins almost as a scene from soft-core pornography and then moves into her desperate, solitary, masturbation scene.

Love (2004, p.129, emphasis added) argues that “*Mulholland Drive* is remarkable in that it *takes Diane’s tragedy seriously*”, and that she “is a *structural effect* of homophobia, one of the tragic others that modernity produces with such alarming regularity” (Love, 2004, p.130). As such, the film presents us with a world in which modern, democratic as opposed to classical, tragedy is represented through the plight of one young, lesbian, starlet whose fantasy, desire and demise is shown and is “significant precisely as modernity’s remainder” (Love, 2004, p.120). Lesbianism, Hollywood, and the feel of *noir* provide, in *Mulholland Drive*, a deep sense of how cliché is passed off in Hollywood as dreams (Love, 2004, p.121). Yet here the dream is shown to be a nightmare where cliché upon cliché is piled up, one on top of another in an excessive fashion in which “*Mulholland Drive* is both a film ‘about’ fantasy and a film permeated by fantasy at every level” (Love, 2004, p.122). It is also a film in which the temporal disjunctions of deferred action are integrated into the filmic text and the spectator’s involvement in the act of viewing the film. The spectator’s involvement repeats deferred action’s uncertainty. The filmic text is fixed but the viewing of it is not. This viewing experience is therefore both like and different from psychoanalytic experience.

It may be useful here to recall that Lacan referred to the fantasy scene as comparable with a frozen image on a cinema screen (Evans, 1996, p.60), and indeed, just after Betty and Rita run screaming from the sight of Betty’s decomposing corpse the characters do “freeze”

on screen in multiple exposures. This was to be the ending of the television pilot episode, but in the film it becomes a pivotal point where the traumatic Real has interjected the fantasy that Betty can no longer sustain. If, in *Lost Highway*, Fred's trauma is his inability to accept the murder of Renee, then Betty's in *Mulholland Drive* is an inability to accept her traumatic and tragic rejection by her former lover. What, then, is the spectator's relationship to this traumatic situation? On one level Betty's trauma is, obviously, her murderous rage at Camilla's betrayal and her decision to have her ex-lover killed. But, at another level, it is also, as Love points out, the structural tragedy of an individual lesbian relationship in a homophobic society. And here, as elsewhere in Lynch's films, cliché is piled up on cliché to overdetermine the "felt" inauthenticity of contemporary relationships, where the spectator too is implicated in the failure to fully understand how trauma affects us all.

Trauma's tragic end

How can we try and pull these films together? Is there any sense of coherence between them in their depictions of trauma and temporality? I think that what we have in Lynch's films is a different (post)modern account of these issues that we have in *Hiroshima mon amour*. In the latter, the private trauma of the woman is played out alongside the public trauma of Hiroshima to suggest that the historical fact can only be incorporated into the symbolic via private forgetting and remembering. The filmic playing out of her trauma is partly presented to the viewer by the use of flashbacks which put the spectator at the scenes of her distress but we are shown events from her revised point of view by which the trauma can be integrated into her memory, and hence allowing for some form of resolution.

Similarly, in *Detour* the narrative starts close to its dénouement and the spectator is metaphorically taken through a detour to find out how Al Roberts ended up here. It is, as Maureen Turim suggests, a classic *noir* flashback in which we find out via Al's confessional the trials and tribulations he has encountered.

However, in *Memento*, *Lost Highway*, and *Mulholland Drive* we have, I think, another form of traumatic remembering and forgetting in which the spectator is placed by these texts in a different position. The “facts” of the traumas are never clearly revealed and the spectator is in a similar position to the main character, where we experience what that character is going through, although we never fully understand their motivation and nor do they. As Kornbluh remarks about *Memento* the narrative is not revealed because the ostensible traumatic cause of Leonard Shelby’s condition turns out to be immaterial. Similarly, in *Lost Highway*, although we might “know” that Fred Madison killed Renee, the filmic “facts” keep this knowledge suspended. Likewise, in *Mulholland Drive* fantasy and desire are also kept apart to offer glimpses of the traumatic Real, and it is at this point that meaning fails. The spectator is positioned by these texts in a way which explores and develops an understanding of contemporary trauma and which, as Heather K. Love argues, is tragic in its individual dimensions where ideologically we are encouraged to be separate, alienated and hence politically incapable of finding means to counter the prevailing ideology. As she writes, “the fact that modern subjects are no longer able to experience the full intensity of tragic feeling should not be taken as a sign that tragedy has disappeared, but rather that it has become so widespread as to be unrecognizable” (Love, 2004, p.117).

As Ropars-Wuilleumier notes at the outset of this chapter there is a sense of cinematic deferred action in which the potential radicalism of modernist art film, as exemplified in *Hiroshima mon amour*, and its subsequent obsolescence, is itself rediscovered, albeit in different forms, via their integration with *noir* in contemporary films such as *Lost Highway*, *Mulholland Drive* and *Memento*. The form of cinematic deferred action in which the initial “advances” of experimental cinema are now reintroduced to cinema audiences in ways that are generally more “acceptable” to the mainstream, but where the origins of these devices may largely be unknown, may, paradoxically, offer a new way forward in the contemporary situation. Tragedy, as Love points out, is now so widespread that we struggle to recognize it.

Without being able to do so we run the risk of being like Fred Madison, Betty and Leonard Shelby, amnesiac to our own histories, forgetting without remembering and that is the real trauma, from which we must learn to forget in order to remember anew and thus have some possibility of “unhinging our fundamental fantasies, and [thereby] image ways to resist the power of ideology” (McGowan and Kunkle, 2004, p.153). And perhaps film, and in particular these films, offer the beginnings of ways of doing so. Now, where was I?⁷

“It Is Happening Again”: Experiencing the Lynchian Uncanny

The uncanny can (and indeed perhaps must) always be exposed as a ‘historical and cultural phenomenon’; but it can (and indeed perhaps must) also, *at the same time*, be what questions, unsettles and defamiliarizes any ‘ordinary’ sense or understanding of the ‘historical’, the ‘cultural’ and the ‘phenomenon’.

(Royle, 2003, p. 161)

Psychoanalysis doesn’t provide a new and better interpretation of the uncanny; it maintains it as *a limit to interpretation*.

(Dolar, 1991, p. 19)

Beginnings, again



Figure 53. Opening still from *Premonitions Following an Evil Deed*, Lynch’s contribution to *Lumière and Company*, 1995. (Hartmann, 2004)

In 1995, to commemorate the centenary of the Lumière Brothers first “motion pictures”, forty film-makers, one of whom was David Lynch, were each commissioned to create a fifty-two second film using the original, restored, camera¹. Lynch’s film (see Figures 53-55) presents a short, oblique narrative which offers us a timely insight into the relationship of his work to early, “primitive”, cinema. The narrative, strangely realized in its form and content, echoes

other Lynch films. In particular, the use of long “fades” to black as segmentation is reminiscent of how this device is used, albeit by editing, in *Blue Velvet*, *Lost Highway* and *Mulholland Drive*. Similarly, the non-linear sequencing of the events, coupled with the spectator’s thwarted desire to fully understand what is presented in the various segments and their interrelationship, indicates how Lynch’s films refer to early cinema, and alternative conceptions of the possibilities of film, and therefore differ from mainstream cinema’s reliance upon the teleology of linear narratives and genre conventions.

The still (and indeed the film) seems to be a ghostly apparition of other films, which by the logic of deferred action refer back to the beginnings of film, to see those origins again from another angle, from where its trajectory might have been very different, and maybe could become so again. This short piece, from a contemporary perspective, re-presents the strangeness of film while, at the same time, invoking a different narrative trajectory to that integrated in the North American industry. There is a joining together of different film histories, and temporal conjunctions, which provides a means of (re)considering Lynch’s films in relation to this history and contemporary theory and practice. Moreover, if we go back to the beginnings of film we can find other approaches to the medium which suggest its normalization is/was contingent and not inevitable. Referring to the Lumière brother’s first screenings, Sean Cubitt (2004, p. 15) makes the point that these films presented, in the words of Tom Gunning, an “aesthetic of astonishment” where the cinema event predominated over narrative. In addition, Cubitt (2004, p. 19) refers to the differences of these films to contemporaneous Edison films produced in North America, of 1884 and 1885, where “we find an immediate conforming of cinema with the entertainment industry” via the anchoring of images to narrative. Elsewhere, Gunning (1995, p. 62) has shown how in France “Méliès main claim to fame comes from grafting the nineteenth-century tradition of magic theater [sic] onto the nascent apparatus of motion pictures”. Therefore, the dominance of narrative to film was not the only paradigm for the emerging industry, its origins in other forms of entertainment

and magic provided alternative potential pathways for its development. If we consider these other approaches, we might be able to ascertain how they continue to “work” from within the constraints of the narrative straightjacket, and indeed, how narrative and genre are constantly disturbed and enriched by film’s uncanny supplement. Or, rather, how the ontological strangeness of film eludes the attempts to constrain it.

Cubitt (2004, p. 38) goes on to say that “Narrative, then, is not an essential quality of film, but only a potential and secondary quality arising from the production of time in the differentiation within and between frames”. And in these stills we are perhaps presented with Barthes’ filmic, which for him is only truly present in the (black and white) still, as a palimpsest, where the third, obtuse meaning can be found, where movement has itself been stilled from its cinematic illusion rather than presented as a series of static images. Retroactively, this may allow us to look again at the rest of the body of work to ascertain the connections between Lynch’s use of film and a counter-trajectory to its normalization within Hollywood, and hence Lynch’s place within that history and practice.

The film opens with three police officers walking towards the figure of a dead male body on the ground and then presents us with two very different scenarios, which appear to exist simultaneously on other planes of “reality”. We are shown languid images of three woman seated on a bench alongside a tree where a doe is tethered, which links into a strange “scientific” experiment/torture scene being carried out by alien figures upon a naked women submerged in a water tank (Figure 54).



Figure 54

The final shots depict the parents of the dead boy at their home awaiting the arrival of the police officer to inform them of their son's death (Figure 55). I use the word awaiting purposely, for an earlier shot showed the woman look towards the open doorway, then walk towards it and look out to the left in the direction the police officer later enters from, as if she knew that bad news was coming their way; her "premonition" of the evil deed.



Figure 55. The denouement.

In this short piece the strangeness of film is reactivated by Lynch's creative exploitation of the constraints imposed upon the directors. The film's narrative, using a murder scene as its manifest framework, also provides a link with the work of Edgar Allan Poe and E.T.A. Hoffmann, through Surrealism and *film noir*, into contemporary versions of *noir* in the work of Lynch and others. This short film gives us the premonition of the uncanny underside of cinema which has consistently haunted the attempts to normalize it within the

North American film industry. However, Sean Cubitt (2004, p. 4) also remarks that “there is something fictive, something uncanny, or something that, however marginally, fails the reality test in even the most engrossing films, and perhaps in them most of all”. And he goes on to contest the normative approach to film put forward by David Bordwell and the “Post-Theorists” in which all cinema practices are referred to the North American industry as *the* film style and form, where film’s strangeness is constrained. In contrast, Cubitt seeks to provide a different reading of film by understanding the *object* of cinema, reading a history of images from a digital perspective for a digital audience, in such a way that “to understand the conditions under which we can make the future otherwise than the past or present” (Cubitt, 2004, p. 12). So, a digital perspective allows us to reinvestigate past images, to “see” them anew, so to speak, and thus to provide the possibility to make things different in the future².

Using Lynch’s Lumière film here allows us to rethink this body of work; to see it again from another angle, from which it has, in so many critical reactions, been read. I will seek to suggest that the uncanny lies at the core of Lynch’s films. This in itself is not an original notion and many writers have pointed out the interweaving connection of the uncanny in this body of work (Mulvey 1996; Rodley 1997; Vidler 1992). The uncanny, I will argue, pervades Lynch’s work in such a way that its uneasy “nonspecificity”, to borrow Rodley’s term, becomes a haunting presence in itself. I will argue that Lynch’s work takes over the mantle of the uncanny as previously traced by critics in the writings of E.T.A. Hoffmann, Hanns Heinz Ewer’s film, *The Student of Prague* (1913), and the work of the Surrealists, amongst others. The uncanny does not just provide motifs or themes in these texts: it is *immanent* in the work itself.

In relation to *Blue Velvet*, for instance, Laura Mulvey (1996, p. 150) has pointed out that “The Oedipal narrative unfolds in a *mise-en-scène* of the uncanny”, incorporating the Gothic within small-town America, which she regards as one of the film’s main triumphs, and that “*Blue Velvet* uses the cinema’s own rhetoric to portray the uncanny” (Mulvey 1996, p.

153). I will seek to show that *Blue Velvet* and most other of Lynch's films stage the uncanny in ways which supplement any narrative concerns and, as such, can be traced back as examples of another trajectory of film which enriches and supplements the hegemonic, stifling, straightjacket of narrative and genre conventions within the North American film industry. For Rodley (1997, p. ix) "the uncanny – in all its nonspecificity – lies at the very core of Lynch's work". Similarly, Anthony Vidler (1999, p. 10) remarks that "The domestic and suburban uncanny of David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*, and, more recently, of his television series 'Twin Peaks,' draws its effect from the ironization of all the commonplaces of a half-century of uncanny movies".

In undertaking this task I will also discuss Lynch's films alongside *The Innocents* (Jack Clayton, 1961) as a means of comparing one film which deliberately stages the uncanny in contrast to this body of work, in an attempt to ascertain the similarities and differences between them. This will also allow me to consider the Freddie Francis connection – the cinematographer on *The Innocents* as well as a number of Lynch's films (*The Elephant Man*, *Dune*, and *The Straight Story*). For Lynch and Francis became good friends while shooting *The Elephant Man* and Lynch sought him out for other films, perhaps seeing or sensing in his work a unique ability to make strange the familiar. (Interestingly, apart from specific aspects of *The Elephant Man* and *The Straight Story*, it can be argued that the films Francis worked on with Lynch are the least uncanny of the body of work.)

Film and "The 'Uncanny'"

Starting with Sigmund Freud's essay of 1919, I want to consider the intertwined relationship between psychoanalytic theory and film. As Nicholas Royle points out:

Film haunts Freud's work. It is there in the essay on the uncanny, for example, flickering allusively, elusively, illusively at the edge of the textual screen, in particular in the footnote on the double and the reference to Otto Rank: 'In [Hanns Heinz]

Ewer's *Der Student von Prag* [*The Student of Prague*, 1913], which serves as the starting-point of Rank's study on the "double", the hero has promised his beloved not to kill his antagonist in a duel. But on his way to the duelling-ground he meets his "double", who has already killed his rival' (U, p. 358, n. 1). Neither here nor anywhere else in the text does Freud spell out the point that Rank's 'starting-point' is in fact film, or what Rank terms a 'film-drama' (Rank, p. 4).

(Royle, 2003, p. 76)

While Freud's essay uses a source from literature to read the uncanny (E.T.A.Hoffmann's 'The Sandman'), the relationship and interconnection of film and psychoanalysis has been pointed out by many commentators (see, *inter alia*: Bergstrom 1999, Cubitt 2004, and Lebeau 2001). Indeed, Cubitt (2004, p. 53) remarks that in the emergent consumer culture of the nineteenth century in which eroticism seeped into the public space, it is "no wonder that the spectacle, psychoanalysis and cinema share a birthday" in relation to the development of commodity fetishism. Otto Rank's (1989 [1914]) study of the double, which provides many insights into this figure, is inextricably caught up in the specificity of film to represent, or, rather to provide the conditions for releasing uncanny effects, which are, perhaps, medium-specific, or more capable of aesthetic realization through film than other static media.



Figures 56 and 57. *The Student of Prague*: the power of film to explore the figure of the double

And just as Sarah Kofman (1991) takes Freud to task for not fully considering the specificity of literature in his reading of the uncanny, so it is important for us to be aware of

the specificity of film in relation to the uncanny as a means of being alive in our readings of the filmic texts.

Nicholas Royle states, in relation to Hoffmann's short story, which is the basis of Freud's essay, that:

What 'The Sandman' shows, above all perhaps, is that the uncanny is a reading-effect. It is not simply *in* the Hoffmann text, as a theme ('spot the uncanny object in this text') that can be noted and analysed accordingly. The uncanny is a ghostly feeling that arises (or doesn't arise), an experience that comes about (or doesn't), as an effect of reading. The uncanny figures as the very impossibility of a so-called thematic reading.

(Royle, 2003, p. 44)

When we come to film we have also to attend to the visual and the aural in our readings; to the specifics of the medium in relation to this ghostly feeling. And, for Freud, it should be remembered that:

The uncanny as it is depicted in *literature*, in stories and imaginative productions, merits in truth a separate discussion. Above all, it is a much more fertile province than the uncanny in real life, for it contains the whole of the latter and *something more besides* [my emphasis], something that cannot be found in real life.

(Freud, 1990, p. 372)

It is this "something more besides" that I want to develop in relation to Lynch's films. What, for Freud, is this supplement and (how) does it manifest itself in this body of work? And why is the uncanny in literature and imaginative productions "a much more fertile province" than real life? And how can these comments relate to film, and, in particular, to Lynch's texts?

Freud (1990, p. 341) divides the uncanny, which he defines as "that class of the frightening which leads back to what is old and long familiar" into two categories: one being those factors which arise from our inability to surmount our animistic beliefs (animism, magic and sorcery, and the omnipotence of thoughts), and the other being repressed infantile complexes (for example: the castration complex, and womb fantasies). For him:

The uncanny belonging to the first class – that proceeding from forms of thought that have been surmounted – retains its character not only in experience but in fiction as well, so long as the setting is one of material reality...the class of the uncanny which proceeds from repressed complexes is the more resistant of the two
(Freud, 1990, p. 375)

In the final part of his essay he seeks to extend his psychoanalytic understanding of the uncanny to develop and extend aesthetics as it was then understood. Sarah Kofman (1991, p. 122) suggests that the structure of the essay is itself important in the way in which Freud organizes his materials to provide an argument which emphasizes that what is “at stake is a particular case of the repressed...aesthetic pleasure itself also implies the return of repressed infantile fantasies”. She draws attention to the inverted structure of the essay in which he starts with an investigation into the etymological meanings of the word *unheimlich* and then proceeds to look at actual examples, whereas, in practice, he had started his investigation by recourse to the examples and then considered the various linguistic uses and meanings of the word. So, she suggests, Freud’s argument is with traditional aesthetics itself, not just with an investigation into the reverse of the more elevated sublime, but to show how infantile fantasies are at the core of all aesthetic categories. She goes on to argue that:

It seems that the difference between a work of art that causes pleasure and one that causes uncanniness is the degree to which the repressed content is ‘disguised’: one functions, so to speak, like a normal dream and the other like a nightmare. In the latter case there is a greater degree of recognition of the repressed than the former – hence the dreamer’s anxiety, proceeding from the superego’s inability to accept such an explicit realization of desire.

(Kofman, 1991, p. 123)

Ultimately, she argues that while Freud “deconstructs the sacred character of art”, he remains trapped within the “traditional logic of the sign” by seeking to stabilize the uncanny with

reference to castration anxiety, whereas the radical aspect of his essay is the insistence upon the role of the death drive. In a similar vein Royle points out that:

Freud doesn't explicitly name the death drive in 'The Uncanny' – that doesn't happen until the following year, with the publication of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. But the death drive lurks, as if forbidden to speak its name, everywhere in the 1919 essay. (Royle, 2003, p. 86)

Royle (2003, p. 87) goes on to invoke the work of Sarah Kofman and Elisabeth Bronfen in their readings of Freud's work to argue that "The death drive has to do with the figure of woman... [and] the uncanny commingling of silence, woman and the desirableness of death is quite explicit in the 1913 essay ['The Theme of the Three Caskets'], even if it falls silent in 'The Uncanny' and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*".

In a sense most of Lynch's work can be read as the depiction of a nightmare behind the seemingly idyllic surface of a dream and the position of woman within that structure. If films act like dreamwork, the displacements and condensations of Lynch's films attest to the dream-like nature of the medium itself. Aesthetics and the uncanny thereby coexist in a Möbius-like structure intertwined via their relationship to infantile fantasies.

Royle (2003, p. 40) also shows how Freud provides "*his own* 'short story'" in his summing up of 'The Sandman' in which he presents "as if it were an objective, disinterested, merely 'factual' summing up". What is interesting in respect of the "form" of Hoffmann's story is the mixture of genres, which appears a useful correlate to consider Lynch's use of multiple genres, as I have sought to argue throughout this thesis. As Royle (2003, p.44) writes, "'The Sandman' is from the very outset explicitly, self-remarkingly concerned with the performative nature of (its own) language". And this is something I would like to bear in mind as we read some more extracts from the Lynch corpus, and by taking our extracts from these

works we too produce our own doubles or palimpsests in the way in which Barthes describes the filmic.

Rather than seek to consider the theoretical aspects of Freud's essay as separate from this body of work, and then to relate the discussion to Lynch's films, I will seek to read these extracts from the film texts, and to consider Freud's comments and critical commentaries of his essay alongside the extracts, to read from within so to speak, rather than to seek to impose from outside. It appears to me that the uncanny, in its indeterminacy, temporally disturbs boundaries and binaries such as inside/outside and, therefore, I need to find a suitable method for reading/writing about the uncanny (if I can persuade my readers of what I find uncanny), which should itself seek to blur the boundaries between theory and text, between reading and experiencing the uncanny's indeterminate effects/affects, and therefore become a "reading-effect" in itself.

"Rooms...used at daylight as if they were dark woods"³

Moving on from this initial discussion and Lynch's Lumière film of 1995, via 1895, we come to Jack Clayton's *The Innocents* of 1961. The film, based on Henry James's Gothic novella *The Turn of the Screw*, visually recreated the ghostly, ambiguously disquieting quality of the original story. I want to pick out certain scenes for discussion here to consider how the unsettling quality of the film is set up for the audience, and the ways in which uncanny effects may be cinematically effected and affecting, to read alongside examples from Lynch's work.

At the beginning of the film we are introduced to the uncle interviewing Miss Gibbons for the post of governess. This scene, which on one level straightforwardly provides the narrative framework for what is to come, is also haunted by the previous opening shots of Miss Gibbons prior to this as the credits are shown. She is shown in close-up to the left of the frame whispering "I only wanted to help the children". These shots, although given to us at the start are, in actuality, from the end of the film, so we have a prescient warning of her fall from

prelapsarian innocence and purity at the interview to the distraught, damaged (and damaging) figure at the end. A warning of what will transpire is given to us at the outset. However, the seemingly straightforward shots used in the following interview scene themselves add to the disquieting aspect of the uncle's instructions. Although they seem to suggest the utilization of a standard shot/reverse shot pattern, when we look closely we can see that this is never actually the case, these shots do not give us each character's positioning as one would expect, and this use of camerawork presents a skewed, out-of-time reading. As Neil Sinyard (2000, p. 95) remarks, the mystery of the previous governess's death is "shrewdly entwined with a sense of the uncle's heartlessness" in the way the narrative is delivered to us. At the same time, because of the opening shots, the audience is made acutely aware that Bly has been, and will be again, the site of strange, deadly events, and in a sense we are thereafter on the lookout for any signs that things may be untoward. The audience is put on alert from the start, particularly as Miss Gibbons appears to fall under the uncle's spell and as director Jack Clayton himself put it, "she falls for him in a kind of 'enormously Victorian romantic way'" (Quoted in Sinyard 2000, p. 96).

When the interview scene dissolves⁴ to Miss Gibbons' arrival at Bly, the house and gardens look calm and peaceful, apart, perhaps, from the haunting sounds of Flora's singing "hanging" in the air. But when Miss Gibbons is introduced by Flora to Mrs. Grose, the housekeeper, and she notices the vase of white roses on the table, even before her hand touches them the petals fall off, or as the screenplay so eloquently puts it, "shiver off the bloom" (Quoted in Sinyard 2000, p.96). This seemingly small and trivial point portentously suggests so much in that, as an unexpected detail, it sets the scene for what is to yet to happen at Bly. This tiny detail, coupled with all the ambiguities in the film, presents the spectator with a *mise-en-scène* of the uncanny, which escalates as the film progresses. Sinyard suggests that what makes the later appearance of the ghosts so affecting for audiences is that we see Miss Gibbons' reaction before seeing what she has seen to evoke that reaction. Therefore, cause and

effect is reversed so that we are never sure if the ghosts are seen only by her or whether Miles and Flora see them too. Yet, when Miss Gibbons picks up the blackboard with the tear on it in the schoolroom we are given as Pauline Kael put it a “little pearl of ambiguity” (Quoted in Sinyard 2000, p. 107). Ambiguity and uncertainty are used throughout the film to destabilize any clear and coherent sense of narrative understanding.

The phrase “rooms...used at daylight as if they were dark forests” spoken by Mrs. Grose, indicates the importance and interrelationship between darkness and sexuality in the depiction of the uncanny. The dark forest of sexuality, which ought to remain hidden and out of sight as Freud would put it in his definition of the *unheimlich*, was brought into the house by the goings on between Quint and Miss Jessel and seen by the children. The “unnatural” knowledge of Miles in particular, which is manifested in the kiss he gives Miss Gibbons is later strangely reciprocated at his death. The ambiguities of the relationships between adults, and between adults and prematurely mature children, help to give *The Innocents* its manifest sense of strangeness.

Similarly, when Miss Gibbons is in the garden the ambiguity of fear appears at seemingly inappropriate times. So, for instance, when she pulls back the flowers and sees the small statue of a putto everything, at first sight, appears to be peaceful and calm. Yet, immediately after this a large, black bug crawls out of the statue’s mouth from which she recoils in horror and, at the same time, drops her secateurs into the ornamental pond. Yet, the real moment of terror comes after this, when in her heightened state she looks towards the tower and sees the shape or silhouette of a man walking across the ramparts. The bug thereby acts as a metaphoric indicator of the uncanny and lies in a warped relation to metonymy as this scene testifies. The bug, as a ruin of language, provides an eerie sensation like something that has not been named but is experienced without a clear signifier. And, as I write this, unexpectedly, I have a delicious shiver of terror running down my back as I relive this

cinematic moment, which comes as a great surprise to me and was both unexpected and uninvited.

In *The Innocents* the audience is put on edge from the start. The ghostly quality of the film is presented in the ambiguities that overtake certainties which fall away like the rose petals. In *Lost Highway*, by contrast, at the party at Andy's house (see Chapter 5 for more detail of this scene), the Mystery Man says to Fred Madison "You invited me. It's not my habit to go where I'm not wanted". This strange figure is made palpably solid; there is no ambiguity about whether or not he exists, but rather about what he is for Fred. Indeed, he is like the bug in *The Innocents*, like something that cannot be named, he occupies a structurally similar position in the film's narrative and mood. This brings me to another, linked, aspect of the uncanny that I now want to focus on – the role of the house as the site of domestic terror, or, rather, the domestic as an *actant* in Lynch's work.

Home is where the hurt is



Figure 58.

The frontage of the Madison house at night shot through video technology, *Lost Highway* (Hartmann, 2004)

As Anthony Vidler points out, the uncanny is:

Aesthetically an outgrowth of the Burkean sublime, a domesticated version of absolute terror...Its favorite [sic] motif was precisely the contrast between a secure and homely interior and the fearful invasion of an alien presence; on a psychological level, its play was one of doubling, where the other is, strangely enough, experienced as a replica of the self, all the more fearsome because apparently the same.

(Vidler, 1999, p. 3)

The relationship between the home and family traumas in Lynch's work points out a vitally important aspect of the uncanny, the fear of invasion into an overtly secure domestic space from a force which might be in the house all the time. As Roberto Harari (2001, p. 62) points out in his introduction to Lacan's seminar on anxiety, "It [the family] is the welcoming, warm nucleus where each person can feel secure and sheltered. Nevertheless, the family is also the place where the subject undergoes the worst experiences (with regard to affects, of the effect of structure) that she or he will suffer". As such, it is no wonder that the suburban houses in Lynch's work should contain horror and terror, and that is why they are so uncanny, as their domestic comforts are amplified to such a degree that a parallel discomfort comes into view. The perceived safety of the house is always under threat both from without and within. In *Lost Highway*, for instance, as discussed in the previous chapter, the Madison home is one in which the exterior structure offers no security against the "invasion" which is produced by the introduction of the video tapes into the domestic space. These technological instances of Fred's mental state "show" that the danger is in the house all along. The supposedly safe interior, the home, is the site of Fred's violent jealousy and murderous rage. So while the initial threat appears to come from outside, the spectator experiences the same strangeness of the videos by becoming aware of the "performative twisting" of Fred's mental state commingled with the architectural structure of the home.

When Renee goes outside into the bright sunlight to collect the newspaper the manila envelope containing the first videotape sits on a lower step. As she takes it into the house she seems startled by Fred's entry into the room. The video also relates to the porn business that Mr Eddy/Dick Laurent, Andy and Renee are involved in. So when Fred and Renee watch the first tape she appears relieved that it is only black and white footage of the exterior of the house and she nervously says "It must be from a real estate agent". The technology of video, which presents grainy shots of the house even, as I write, is fast becoming obsolete as it is replaced by digital media. And, like the Lumière camera it is now a reminder of the speed of

technological change of capitalist means of representation which re-presents its strangeness via its ever increasing obsolescence. Similarly, the intercom through which Fred hears the message that Dick Laurent is dead is the first means by which the seeming security of the structure is breached. Inside the house, the darkness of the interiors also appear to dissolve the boundaries between fixed objects – the walls and structure of the interior of the house. The boundaries between the *heimlich* and the *unheimlich* which, for the most part appear solid and safe, can, very quickly, become permeable, thereby unsettling any rational sense of safety and security. The intrusion of the outside into the house via the intercom and the videos provides a strangely familiar terror which is further signified by Fred's walk into the darkness prior to Renee's murder and her call to him down the seemingly endless corridor. Her voice, which echoes as she calls out his name, indicates how the darkness breaks down the boundary between inside and outside, both geographically and psychically. Similarly, in this film, smoke accompanies images of the strangeness of the domestic interior. Anthony Vidler shows how, in a range of stories from Hoffmann to Rimbaud:

smoke is thus an agent of dissolution by which the fabric of the house is turned into the depth of the dream; in the same way, as an instrument of the sublime, smoke has always made obscure what otherwise would have seemed too clear.

(Vidler, 1992, p. 41)

But here Lynch's use of smoke openly makes it into a cliché which, because of its familiarity and the obviousness of its use, becomes less strange and stranger at the same time. The banality of its use, as an obvious trope of the uncanny, singles it out for renewed attention – the *déjà vu* of the ghostly – the made strange by its too obvious usage. But, like *The Innocents*, there is a sense here in which the objects that are drawn to our attention act to raise our awareness and terror only as deceptive lures which hide from us, or only later reveal, the true terror. There is, therefore, an inauthenticity of the uncanny, which is made manifest in these

examples. Take, for example, those shots when the spectator looks down the dark corridors of the Madison household for Fred, and when he returns into the light everything appears to be safe and secure and it is later, when safety appears to have been recovered, that the terror reemerges.

It is also in darkness that Jeffrey Beaumont in *Blue Velvet* leaves Detective William's house after delivering the ear he had found, and as he walks down the path from the front door he hears a voice say "Are you the one that found the ear?" The camera then peers, from Jeffrey's point of view, into the darkness from the direction of the voice as swelling music builds up as the chaste and pure figure of Sandy emerges into the light. Laura Mulvey has written of this entrance thus:

In Freud's definition the uncanny is simultaneously located in homeliness and is the eruption of something that should remain hidden, *Blue Velvet* uses the cinema's own rhetoric to portray the uncanny as, for instance, when Sandy first appears on the screen in a long fade up from black and accompanied by a swelling score.

(Mulvey, 1996, p. 153)

Prior to this meeting the scene had opened with a shot up the darkened stairs of the Beaumont house as an upstairs door opens to reveal the silhouetted figure of Jeffrey, whose descent into what Mulvey refers to as the netherworld, begins at this point. As Jeffrey leaves the house the TV screen depicts a man's legs going upstairs in a *film noir*. It is this knowingness, this playing with film form and genre, combined with the ability to utilize the inherent strangeness of film, which creates the uncanny throughout these works. As Jeffrey leaves the Williams' house he says, "Say hello to Sandy from me". Yet, when he meets Sandy it is apparent that they do not really know each other, but that growing up in the same small town they have attended the same school. What appears to be familiar is (knowingly) made strange. Again, Mulvey puts her finger on it when she writes:

However, the surface world is depicted as 'surface'. It has the immaterial, itself uncanny, quality of a cliché which speaks of appearance and nothing else and the impermanent, almost comic, quality of a postcard which has no substance other than connotation. On the other hand, unlike the flatness and colour saturation of the opening images, the darkness draws in the camera with the force of fascinated curiosity.

(Mulvey, 1996, p. 151)

Later on when Jeffrey is confronted by Mike, Sandy's ex-boyfriend, the naked, battered and bruised figure of Dorothy is shown staggering onto the front lawn of Jeffrey's house as Mike taunts him by saying, "Is that your mother?" Sandy moves from darkness into light, whereas Dorothy's battered body is dark and bruised in contrast to the whiteness of her unaffected skin⁵.

Similarly, in *Eraserhead*, the darkness and solitude, though not silence as the omnipresent industrial sounds permeate the film and thereby provide a sonic sense of the uncanny, are present and (in)correct when Henry is enticed into a sexual encounter with the "Beautiful girl across the Hall" (Figure 59).



Figure 59. *Eraserhead*: The beautiful girl across the hall

Henry, sitting alone in his room, hears two knocks at the door. When he opens the door we are presented with shots from his perspective into the deep, black, darkness from which, after what appears to be some considerable time, the woman emerges. She says “I locked myself out of my apartment...And it’s *soo* late”. She comes into the room as Henry retreats in fear of this dark seductress, but at the same time he tries to quiet the sounds of the mutant “baby”. Then they make love in a deep pool of what appears to be a milky substance and submerge under the liquid on the surface of which lies her hair, floating strangely, separated from the rest of her body. She is then shown emerging from darkness to witness the planet, which leads into the “Lady in the Radiator” singing “In heaven” (Figure 60).



Figure 60. The Lady in the Radiator

The Lady’s appearance and song are strangely amusing and reassuring rather than terrifying. Her face, with its protuberances, seems more comic than disquieting, even as she squelches umbilical cords under her shoes as Fats Waller’s organ sounds accompany her jerky lateral movements across the stage.

So far in looking at specific scenes I have concentrated on the visual effects, but these cannot, in Lynch’s work, be divorced from the extraordinary and visceral sense of sound. Sound can act as an uncanny precursor to trauma, reactivating the sense of dread and fear. Nicholas Royle points out that:

Hoffmann’s story suggests uncanniness in the experience of sound, ear and voice. Freud makes no mention of this dimension of ‘The Sandman’. Again, it is a question

of something neither quite simply thematic nor formal, but rather an *eerie*, *performative twisting*. There is a repeated emphasis on the frightening sound of the sandman

(Royle, 2003, p. 46, emphasis added)

Sound “works” throughout Lynch’s films providing a continual “performative twisting” with which to produce an eerie effect and affect for the spectator. In a very real sense, unlike most films where soundtracks are added to the images later, Lynch’s films incorporate sounds throughout and within the images, and are not separated out for post-production. This provides a strong sense of how sounds can by-pass rational, cognitive “understanding” of the narrative. Sounds travel and affect indirectly, working on the body and psyche in ways which disrupt the narrative flow⁶.

Seeing something too close is one of the aspects of anxiety that Lacan talks about in his seminar on Anxiety (*Angoisse*) – it arises because one is too close to the object of desire. The well-known opening of *Blue Velvet* makes this point especially well. As Jeffrey’s father lies on the ground the camera takes us under the neatly-mown lawn to see the bugs lurking beneath, with exaggerated sounds of their squelching bodies in all their pure life-enjoyment⁷. Similarly, the opening shots of the blue velvet curtain as that film’s credits appear texturally strange and take on the appearance more of wood or some dense, material, not the soft, sensuousness of velvet.

The interior of the Lynchian home, indeed any home made uncanny, is also replete with domestic items which can take on a new significance. These can become objects of dread rather than comfort and security. In the Palmer household the ceiling fan at the top of the stairs hums dreadfully as an index of impending incest whenever Leland drugs his wife and rapes his daughter. The fan is presented throughout the series in close-up and its presence suggests problems in the household without making clear what the problems are. At the beginning of the pilot episode as Sarah Palmer runs upstairs to discover that her daughter is not in the house we are given a close-up shot of the fan, which appears odd in the way it is singled out for

attention. This shot is repeated throughout the series. It is strange in that it is singled out for attention but the reasons for doing so do not become obvious until later on when the viewer comes to understand its significance when Leland is shown switching it on after drugging his wife. The sound of the fan, which should provide relief from the night time heat, comes to act indexically for the viewer and Laura as a sign of her impending abuse.

Similarly, in *Twin Peaks* the Palmer household is simultaneously safe and familiar as well as strange and unsettling. Episode 2 starts with a long shot of the house at night. The large, detached, white clapboarded building, well lit up from within, provides an image of secure domestic bliss. However, the shot offers a slightly disturbing presence – too many lights are switched on within, as if in mortal fear of the dark. There is then an image of a stag's head and part of its body, one of the pictures of the natural picturesque inside the house, but, by giving us a close-up, the image takes on a less secure role. As the spectator is presented with this image we hear the sounds of someone (Leland Palmer) breathing heavily and in obvious distress, accompanied by the sounds of his fingers clicking. Following this is a medium shot of Leland standing by the old-fashioned record player in the living room. We see him clicking his fingers and then placing the stylus onto the record. His breathing becomes more measured and controlled as the music, *Pennsylvania 65000*, starts to play. There is then an extreme close-up of the record with the stylus gyrating over the shellac grooves of the LP. And this shot, like the earlier one of the stag, makes the space strange: the shot is too close to the musical object and points out its strangeness as the disembodied joyous big-band sound blares out into the room to strangely accompany his obvious distress, acting contrapuntally to the images presented. This extreme close-up of the outmoded record player acts as a reminder of the proximity of danger within the house, even though the viewers do not know, at this stage, that Leland Palmer is Laura's murderer. Even on subsequent viewings, and with this knowledge now in place, I would argue that this, and other shots, within this scene are still uncanny, for their repetitive strangeness. For, as Sarah Kofman (1991, p. 137) points out

“There can be no instance of the uncanny that does not always already imply repetition”. And, I would argue, this repetition may be the spectator’s repeated viewing of the text rather than textual knowledge from within, which, even with greater narrative knowledge, does not entirely dispel the feelings experienced, albeit in a slightly different way in subsequent engagement with the same text, which is itself strange – to view the same film again but to see it and experience it slightly differently. The repetition is, therefore, structurally inherent in the film text, in the way the shots and sounds repeat the uncanny strangeness of over-proximity. In this case, for example, the extreme close-up of the record player, as with the bugs in *Blue Velvet*, reactivates the initial feelings of strangeness within the ordinary.

As Barbara Engh (1999, p. 60) has pointed out, “To its first auditors, the phonograph was, in a word, uncanny” and, in this shot it becomes so again. As technology becomes outmoded, its strangeness can, in a sense, be experienced anew. No longer taken for granted, its oddness becomes flickeringly palpable particularly when seen in close-up detail. The joyous sounds emanating from the speakers appear at odds with the technical device for playing out these strange sounds, which as Engh (1999, p. 60) also points out, “The troubling convergence of magic and positivism was realized, in a sense, in the phonograph”.

As the music plays Leland walks towards the centre of the living room and stops to try and gather his obviously troubled thoughts. He then looks down to his left as the camera tilts to follow his movement as he picks up the framed photograph of Laura Palmer as Prom Queen (Figure 61). He then starts to dance with the photograph in his outstretched arms in an anti-clockwise circular motion. His wife, Sarah Palmer, then enters the room from the right and tries to stop him dancing, but she is unable to do so, as he says “we must dance”. And, in so doing he breaks the glass of the photograph frame. Sarah then rushes to the record player and throwing out her arm in a manner which appears to be almost mechanical, knocks the stylus away from the record, which screeches as an index of her distress as it “plays” violently against the grain of the record’s grooves, as a discordant reminder of the disjunction between

the music and Leland's desperate dance. She then screams a sentence she had said slightly earlier to Leland as she tried to stop him dancing, and now repeats – "*What is going on in this house?*" as Leland sinks to his knees over the broken photograph frame and, in tears, wipes his blood over the photographed face of his dead daughter. Leland's blood on the surface of the photograph acts as a signifier of her murder, of her blood which was spilled by his hands. As a rack focus brings Leland into clarity the theme tune starts to play and the screen fades to black, before going onto Cooper's dream (see chapter 2).



Figure 61. Laura Palmer as Prom Queen

In this short scene the viewer is presented with close-up images of the technologies of the phonograph, the photograph, and film, which, by deferred action and the spectator's subsequent knowledge, "proves" to us later that the strange and uncanny feelings felt now had some basis in "fact". Laura's iconic image as Prom Queen, her public role as all round "good girl", stands at odds with the image of the dead, fetishized, Laura, to which I have referred in chapter 2. Both photographs haunt the series, as a double of each other. Laura is present even in death; in fact, even more so in death. Her absence fills the screen as an immanent presence to rival Cooper's (again see chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion on this point). In fact it is her death which makes her absence present, as well as the appearance of her cousin and double, Maddy Ferguson, who is played by the same actor (Sheryl Lee), whose own murder

retroactively prefigures that of Laura, taking into account the temporal disjunctions offered by the series and subsequent “prequel” film.

If we now move forwards to the end of episode 14 when Maddy Ferguson is murdered, we have a repetition of this earlier scene. Again the opening shot is a close-up of the record player. Immediately before this Agent Cooper was shown in the Roadhouse listening to Julee Cruise, when the Giant appears and says, as I’ve entitled this chapter “It is happening again”. To refer back to Kofman’s words about there being no instances of the uncanny without repetition, the scene then dissolves to the Palmer household. The next shot from over the shoulder of Leland shows him looking into the mirror, where, at this point, his own face as you would expect is reflected back to him. There is then a cut to the earlier shot where it is Bob’s face reflected in the mirror back at Leland. As Bob “takes” over Leland we are then presented with a cut to a shot of the view from the living room into the brightly lit hallway. As Leland/BOB puts on white surgical gloves Maddy’s voice is heard, off-screen, from upstairs saying “Aunt Sarah. Uncle Leland. What’s that smell?” She then comes into the living room (Figure 62) and sees Leland/BOB.



Figure 62. Maddy Ferguson faces her impending death

Chased by him as she seeks to run away up the stairs, she is dragged into the living room and violently punched. He then, in a repetition of the dance earlier with Laura's photograph, lifts her off the floor and into his arms as he affects an obscene parody of a romantic close dance. During this scene the action alternates between the shots in colour of Leland with Maddy to the bright, white light, shot in slow motion when BOB takes over. When the shots revert to Leland he calls her "Laura" and "my baby" before being depicted thumping her viciously and repeatedly in the face and eventually taking hold of her head and shouting "You're going back to Missoula, Montana", as he then rams her head violently into a photograph on the wall, and as she lies dead on the floor he inserts a letter ("T") under her fingernail, as had been done in the other murders.

Doubles/doubles everywhere

Doubles abound in these sequences: Leland and BOB as his evil double, Maddy as Laura's cousin, and these two scenes doubling in the sense of their depiction of the same yet different representations of trauma. Film ontologically provides a medium which is rich in its possibilities for exploring the figure of the double, and Lynch's films take up these possibilities from *Eraserhead* up to *Mulholland Drive*.

Otto Rank's *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, originally published in 1914, before his break with orthodox Freudian views after 1924, and was itself based around cinema and Hanns Heinz Ewers *The Student of Prague*. For Rank, the double comes from an ancient folk-tradition, the content of which is eminently psychological and, in relation to *The Student of Prague*, he points out that "It may perhaps turn out that cinematography, which in numerous ways reminds us of the dream-work" (Rank, 1971, p.4). For cinematography and editing allow for changes in size and scale, together with different temporalities and spatial configurations to be explored in ways which are similar to the condensations and displacements of dream-work. Rank, like Freud, refers to Hoffmann as the classical creator of the uncanny, particularly

the “double-projection” and that Hanns Heinz Ewers was known as “the modern E.T.A. Hoffman” (Rank, 1971, pp. 8-9). He goes on to state that:

In a particularly clear *defensive form*, *The Student of Prague* shows how the *feared* self obstructs the love for a woman; and in Wilde’s novel (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*) it becomes clear that fear and hate with respect to the double-self are closely related with the narcissistic love for it with the resistance of this love.

(Rank, 1971, p. 73)

He goes on to argue that:

The most prominent symptom of these forms which the double takes is a powerful consciousness of guilt which forces the hero no longer to accept the responsibility for certain actions of his ego, but to place it upon another ego, a double, who is either personified by the devil himself or is created by making a diabolical pact.

(Rank, 1971, p. 76)

Furthermore, ‘The frequent slaying of the double, through which the hero seeks to protect himself permanently from the pursuits of his self, is really a suicidal act’ (Rank, 1971, p.79).

In the depiction of the murder of Maddy Ferguson, already a reenactment of Leland Palmer’s dance scene with Laura’s photograph, we have a doubling of doubles: for Maddy acts as Laura’s double and BOB is Leland’s. Prior to the actual murder when Leland confronts his mirror-image evil double, BOB, we have, as Mladen Dolar (1991, p. 13) points out, the specular image of the non-specular – the Lacanian *objet a*: “We can now see the trouble with the double: the double is that mirror image in which the object *a* is included. *So the imaginary starts to coincide with the real, provoking a shattering unity*’. As Dolar (1991, p. 14) goes on to write:

The double is always the figure of *jouissance*: on the one hand he is someone who enjoys at the subject’s expense; he commits acts one wouldn’t dare to commit, he indulges in one’s repressed desires and makes sure that the blame falls on the subject. On the other hand, though, he is not simply someone who enjoys, but essentially a figure that commands *jouissance*.

And, as I've previously mentioned, that is why the final shots of the final episode of *Twin Peaks* are, to me at least, so disturbing, as Cooper's double appears to be infiltrated by BOB: even our most familiar image of safety is no longer safe.

Silence, solitude and darkness

Freud concludes his essay 'The "Uncanny"' in the following manner:

Concerning the factors of silence, solitude and darkness, we can only say that they are actually elements in the production of the infantile anxiety from which the majority of human beings have never become quite free. This problem has been discussed from a psychoanalytic point of view elsewhere.¹

(Freud, 1990, p.376. The footnote says [See the discussion of children's fear of the dark in Freud's *Three Essays* (1905d), *P.F.L.*, 7, 147 n.1.])

What a strange way to finish! The reader is brought to an abrupt, brusque conclusion and left where? High and dry or somewhere strange and unsettling in itself, as if we have been dismissed, or that the subject is not worthy of further discussion. We then have to consult another essay published fourteen years earlier to try and make sense of this unsettling conclusion. The implication given to the reader is that this problem will be solved or sorted at this other place. Let us take a look at the footnote, to bring it in to the main body of the text, to see if this clears matters up:

1. For this explanation of the origin of infantile anxiety I have to thank a three-year-old boy whom I once heard calling out of a dark room: 'Auntie, speak to me! I'm frightened because it's so dark.' His aunt answered him: 'What good would that do? You can't see me.' 'That doesn't matter,' replied the child, 'if anyone speaks, it gets light.' Thus what he was afraid of was not the dark, but the absence of someone he loved; and he could feel sure of being soothed as soon as he had evidence of that person's presence. [*Added* 1920:] One of the most important results of psychoanalytic research is this discovery that neurotic anxiety arises out of libido, that it is the product of a transformation of it, and that it is thus related to it in the same kind of way as vinegar is to wine. A further discussion of this problem will be found in my *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1916-

17), [Lecture 25], though even there, it must be confessed, the question is not finally cleared up. [For Freud's latest views on the subject of anxiety see his *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1936d) and his *New Introductory Lectures* (1933a), Lecture 32.]

(Freud, 1977, p. 147)

So, that's clear then! It appears as if Freud has got himself into a dark corner where there is not an aunt or other woman who can speak, soothe him and therefore make the darkness light. He is seemingly lost in the dark continent of feminine sexuality where the only response is to keep deferring and deflecting his problem elsewhere. And to add to that the additional material of 1920 further complicates this problem, as does the reference to another lecture – on and on we go in a search which has to be repeated but not resolved.

'The "Uncanny"' essay brings, flickeringly into light, many issues: the death drive; silence, solitude and darkness – which all appear to revolve around the complexities, for Freud, of the feminine and feminine sexuality.

Uncanny modernity/postmodernity

In all of the many examples of uncanny literature and film, the dissolution of exterior/interior suggests a terror that socially might be kept under control, but which, psychically continues to make itself felt. Historically, this terror can be related to changing social conditions within post-Enlightenment attempts to control irrationality by recourse to rational explanations. But, specifically what can be said of the changing conditions in the production and reception of these differing uncanny works?

Mladen Dolar (1991, p. 7) argues that "There is *a specific dimension of the uncanny that emerges with modernity*... and that haunts it from inside" and that in premodern societies "the dimension of the uncanny was covered (and veiled) by the area of the sacred and untouchable". Historically, the modern uncanny came into being during the Enlightenment and the French Revolution where: "There was an irruption of the uncanny strictly parallel with

bourgeois (and industrial) revolutions and the rise of scientific rationality – and, one might add, with the Kantian establishment of transcendental subjectivity, of which the uncanny presents the surprising counterpart”.

In Lynch’s films we are presented with this uncanny supplement, which alongside the spirit of scientific rationality, haunts that “spirit” from within. Dolar goes on to argue that:

Just as Lacan has argued that the subject of psychoanalysis is the subject of modernity based on the Cartesian cogito and unthinkable without the Kantian turn, so one has to extend the argument to the realm of the object, the object *a*. It, too, is most intimately linked with and produced by the rise of modernity. What seems to be a leftover is actually a product of modernity, its counterpart.

(Dolar, 1991, p. 7)

What then of postmodernity? He writes that:

what is currently called postmodernism...is a new consciousness about the uncanny as a fundamental dimension of modernity. It doesn’t imply a going beyond the modern, but rather an awareness of its internal limit, its split, which was there from the outset. Lacan’s object *a* may be seen as its simplest and most radical expression.

(Dolar, 1991, p. 23)

He also points out how popular culture, starting with Gothic fiction, was the first art form to pick up on these changes and express them, be it in written form, or, in Lynch’s case, in film. And, as Laura Mulvey argues, the importance of *Blue Velvet* is its incorporation of the Gothic into small-town America. Lynch’s films provide many examples of this uncanny supplement of modernity, the inherent transgression within (post)Enlightenment rationality.

The problematic element of identifying the uncanny is as much to do with the way it returns, unbidden and when least expected, and with the problems of trying to “fix” it in writing, as it constantly eludes rational attempts to contain it. Freud had to put himself into a receptive frame of mind when writing his essay, as if he had no “knowledge” of the subject – when, indeed, he keeps reminding us of instances when he had felt uncanny strangeness - the

number 62 for example which kept cropping up and reminded him of his then current age, and his repeated returns to areas of which he had no doubt. Indeed, that whole essay can be read as the supplement constantly eluding him as he sought to fix it under the lens of scientific rationality. As Sarah Kofman has argued, in seeking to fasten the signified of the uncanny in relation to repression, Freud fixes the meaning upon castration anxiety. In doing so “Freud, by making a thematic reading of the text, by extracting from it an ultimate signified, the castration complex, responsible for the effect produced, seems trapped within the ‘traditional logic of the sign’”(Kofman, 1991, p. 159). But, at the same time, Freud actively seeks to confront the enigma of the uncanny, of the negative aspect of aesthetics which professional aestheticians had, in his view, neglected by focusing only on the positive aspects of beauty. He argues that it is in psychoanalysis’ realm to explore these avenues which means that he is constantly coming up against this supplement which outstrips any rationalist, empiricist, attempts to locate it and fix it, and thence to tame it. And he feels strangely compelled (repetition compulsion) to keep coming back to it, to try and understand its workings.

As Neil Hertz has pointed out:

The feeling of the uncanny would seem to be generated by being-reminded-of-the-repetition-compulsion, not by being-reminded-of-whatever-it-is-that-is-repeated. It is the becoming aware of the process that is eerie, not the becoming aware of some particular item in the unconscious, once familiar, then repressed, now coming back into consciousness.

(Hertz, 1980, p. 301)

It is the process of being reminded-of-the-repetition-compulsion which creates the sense of the uncanny. Watching a film in the darkness of the auditorium, due to the size of the screen and the sounds emanating around the images, enables the strangeness of the familiar to emerge: to bring forward the “being-reminded-of-the-repetition-compulsion”, which can vanish as soon as one leaves the cinema, but which can return unbidden when least expected. And it is this

very nature of the process by which it appears - the domesticated sublime, the unhomely in the midst of the homely that makes it so uncanny. The boundaries between the *heimlich* and the *unheimlich*, which, for the most part, appear solid and safe, can become, very quickly, permeable, unsettling any rational sense of safety and security.

Lynch's films abound with the uncanny throughout, from where its effects/affects are themselves felt or experienced by the spectator. So rather than looking for themes in works we should perhaps acknowledge that the uncanny is more than this, that it is a supplement which makes its presence felt when least expected, or unbidden, and that film is ontologically able to provide this ghostly presence which disrupts and disturbs attempts to constrain it. And Lynch's films acknowledge these fundamental realizations about the *unheimlich*, and thus offer distinct textural effects/affects which do not seek to separate out the uncanny as a theme in the work, but explore its strangeness from within, thereby creating a Möbius-like relationship between the filmic text and the spectatorial reading-effect which are intertwined and provide for distinct, eerie, forms of "performative twisting".

Conclusion: “A Stitch in Time...”



Figure 63. Jan Vermeer, *The Lacemaker* (1669-1670)

It's not likely that my experience of film is an entirely isolated one. Indeed, rather than the illusion of movement or mobility in filmic objects, the illusion proper to cinema is that this experience and this memory are solitary, hidden, secretly individual, since they make an immediate pact (story, pictures, affective colours) with a part of ourselves that lives without expression; a part given over to silence and to a relative aphasia, as if it were the ultimate secret of our lives – while perhaps it really constitutes our ultimate subjecthood. It seems that in this artificial solitude a part of us is porous to the effects of meaning without ever being able to be born into signification through language. We even recognize there – and to my eyes this is the imprescriptible link between film and fear – an increase in the aphasia of feelings in our social being (the cinema acting upon every social being as if upon one social being).

(Schefer, 1995, p.112)

Pulling threads

So here I am coming to the end of this labour of love. It seems strange having lived with these films for so long in partial silence and then deciding to write about them, seeking to focus my thoughts and feelings, then *actually* putting pen, paper, keyboard and mouse together to try and make sense of my previously largely unsaid thoughts. It feels almost as if I've betrayed a secret, but I do not know to whom I had pledged to keep my thoughts to myself, nor why. And what I write about these films seems so different from what I thought I would end up saying, even from the initial plans I had, but which dramatically and unexpectedly changed as I started and then subsequently reworked each chapter. The silence and relative aphasia which Schefer writes about in respect of what he considers to be the proper illusion of cinema is something that appears to have been hijacked by my writing double. This sense of estrangement, or my strangeness to myself as Kristeva (1991) discusses, makes me feel as if it has been an automaton double who has melded these words together by taking my initial plans and altering them to its design. Yet, this double, my own uncanny strangeness to myself, is itself part of what helps me to love the images and sounds of these films. Again, as Schefer (1995, p. xix) puts it, "I'm just talking about myself. I've never known how to do otherwise; and yet, when I speak of myself (or speak in my own name), I'm still only speaking about what it is that I'm looking for, rather than what I am". And what is it that I'm looking for in these films? Can it be found or is it always beyond one's grasp?

As I come to conclude I wonder what else I can say. Is it here that my thoughts will finally coalesce? Or is it at this point that I, exhausted from this massive, Sisyphean task, collapse at the bottom of the hill before seeking to push the textual boulder to the top again? Is it even possible to (want to) conclude anyway? Can one say all that one wants to say? What happens then? Like a film that has just finished is one left with a sense of jubilation or depletion or the immediate desire to see it or another one? Again, as Schefer (1995, p.xx) goes on to say apropos of his own work on film: "Yet the idea of a plan (a synthesis, a system) is

what's most clearly lacking at the fulcrum of these texts... Within the text there's a labile, fleeting, polymorphous object". And what I'm seeking to do is to consider how the subject and object come together via the sensations produced by cinema, and, in particular, this body of work organized under the signature of "Lynch". And I want to keep open the polysemy of the texts alive, to allow them to "think" and move in ways which does not inhabit a free-flowing discursiveness, and to allow my thoughts to flow across and within the films and other cultural products. By so doing I hope that they will retain or attain some degree of "a labile, fleeting, polymorphous" objectivity, which perhaps tells me something about myself, and my illusionary solitude in relation to this body of work. Then perhaps I will come to some degree of understanding about how these texts interact with cinematic history and Hollywood, and my own history; which might meld together the objects with the spectator in ways which permit mutual imbrications between them. Otherwise, one is left, perhaps, with deflated feelings of writing in the dark; a writing that will not come to light, nor be read, which might exacerbate the solitary illusion of cinema (and forms of academic writing).

But I love these films, my love has been tested and it has not been found wanting, by me at least. They continue to hold a fascination for/over me which has not dissipated during the process of researching and writing. Instead their attraction for me, or rather their hold over me, continues unabated. Except of course for *Dune*¹, for you, whomever it is that reads these words, may have detected that there is no mention of that film anywhere apart from a cursory reference to it in the introductory chapter. I could not bring myself to write about it – it drives me mad. And even though I've watched it many times (purely out of academic rigour) and read all the critical texts in relation to it, I could not bring myself to discuss it here; it would somehow interfere with and diminish the pleasure of the other films.

Tying up ends

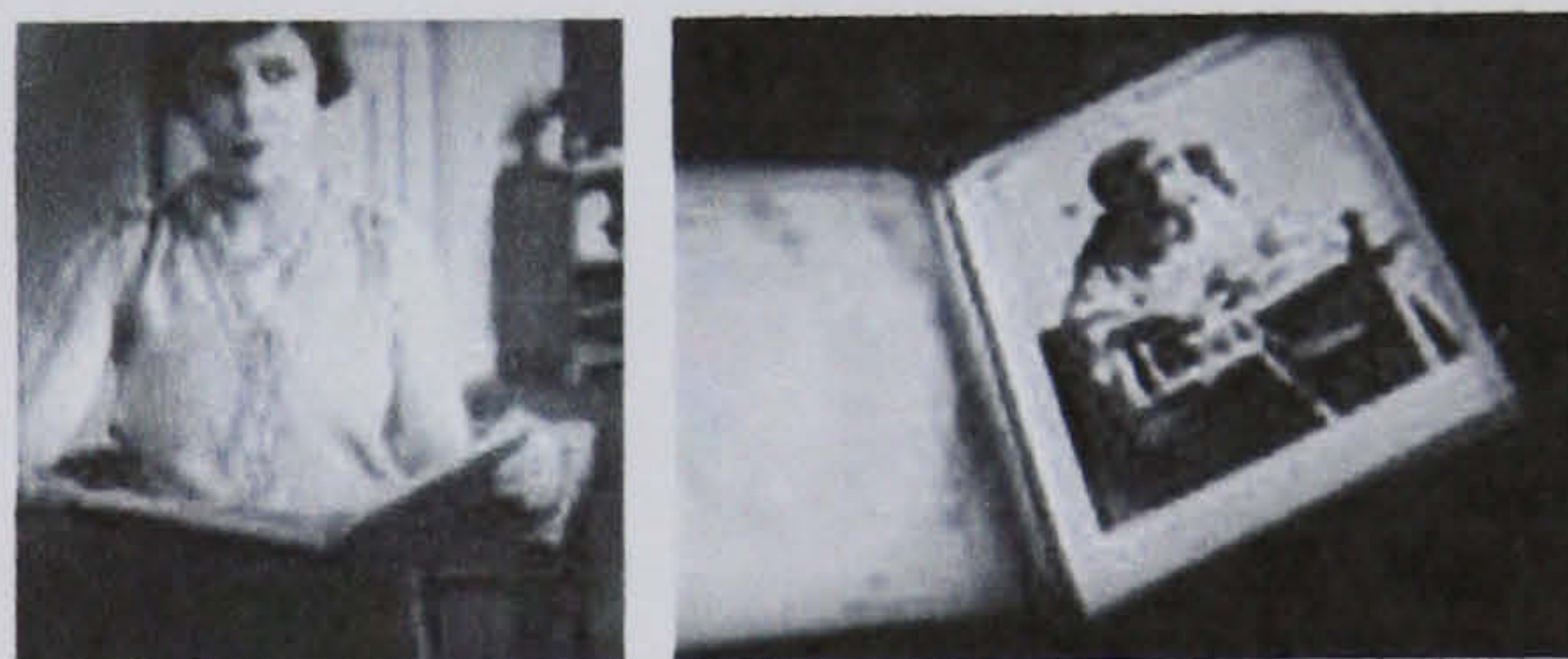
Apart from this admission or confession the remainder of the Lynch corpus retains a strong hold over me. In an effort to bring the various sections of this dissertation together into some form of concluding remarks, by which the interweaving of the various parts of this thesis may come into focus, I want to go over the individual chapters, to pull out some key points, to see if and how they might be stitched together.

In thinking about Lynch as an artist I keep being drawn to an analogy between the late twentieth/early twenty-first century and seventeenth century baroque art and artists. For, as Christine Buci-Glucksmann (1994, p. 23) writes, “the baroque culture of the seventeenth century has been regarded as a culture industry which produced an artificial public arena by combining elements of high and low culture”. And, likewise here, with Lynch’s relationship to Hollywood, mediated through high and low, we have a similar interaction within this culture industry.

In addition to connecting these films to the culture of the baroque, it might also be useful to take on board Slavoj Žižek’s (1995) readings of Lynch as a post-modern “Pre-Raphaelite” whose work overlaps the avant-garde with kitsch in a similar fashion. And there is a sense in which Lynch’s position within Hollywood film production and fine art practice does indeed link together divergent forms of high and popular culture, and allows us to extend our thinking about these films beyond the narrow confines of postmodern critical discourse in which his output has often been contained and constrained within debates about the 1950s and 1980s for example (see the introductory chapter). The sense of “Baroque Reason” in these films can, thereby, provide a wider historical understanding of the various culture industries of the seventeenth century and now, which might allow us to consider how Lynch’s films fit into a wider historical understanding of the technologies of representation. I would like to suggest that one of the central components of this study and which links it together is its evocation of

the irrational and excessive in Lynch's output which, I suggest, requires placement in a wider historical framework than has previously been used in relation to these films.

I am also drawn to an analogy with Vermeer's *The Lacemaker* (see figure 63) to which Adams (2003, p. 173) refers in relation to her analysis of the photographs of Joel-Peter Witkin, where those skeins or threads of real paint that disrupt the entire surface of the painting "shows us something of the intrication of the real, imaginary, and symbolic in representation". In a similar fashion Lynch's films also provide examples of the interlocking of the three Lacanian registers in a manner that suggests that the genealogy or aetiology of these cinematic symptoms coexist with much more than purely contemporary concerns. So, the interweaving of high and low cultural concerns in the individual texts necessitates reflecting upon the wider ramifications of their form and meaning over a long historical period. In addition to this, it may also be remembered that it is this painting that is visible when the woman in *Un Chien Andalou* throws her book to the floor (Figures 64 and 65).



Figures 64 and 65. *Un Chien Andalou* (Google and greylodge, 2005)

Thus, a path weaves its way, refiguring the possibilities of textual tracery between a wide range of materials to arrive, like a postmodern version of Ariadne's web, at the cinematic complexities of Lynch's overdetermined output. Here, from the initial palimpsest from where we began, a filmy recovering of new, critical textual traces and filaments may emerge. But, rather than these comments covering the films, we can, perhaps, think of them as separate

traces, or even textural “sprockets” running alongside the films, to be read or not, as a form of viewing screenplay “notes” to supplement the manifest content of the films themselves.

Unravelling

In the introductory chapter the literature review suggested that the Lynchian archive currently consists of somewhat polarized responses to these film texts. For many commentators Lynch is considered to be an *auteur*, one who’s “subconscious” provides the meaning for the films. Often in line with these approaches is a simultaneous condemnation of the works for being reactionary, displaying racist and sexist tendencies behind their postmodern aesthetic veneer. Against these views are critics, usually of a psychoanalytic persuasion or other tranches of Continental thought, who provide more involved, detailed readings of the films and contemporary filmmaking generally to elucidate the complexities and paradoxes present in the works. The introductory chapter also brought into focus the widely differing positions between Theory and Post-Theory which has, in one form or another, continued to play off against each other throughout this dissertation.

In Chapter 2 I sought to provide a detailed reading of the closing sequence of *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* as a form of metonym or synecdoche for the whole of Lynch’s output. Predominately using Walter Benjamin’s work I suggested that this extract brought together many important aspects of Lynch’s output – melancholia and tragedy, (black) comedy, *jouissance*, cinematic technology (especially slow motion), and the conjoined aesthetics of femininity and death – in an aesthetic of failure, where failure is paradoxically a form of success. In addition, this chapter introduced the historical reading of this film alongside Benjamin’s work on baroque tragedy, by which we could start to consider Lynch’s work within a longer historical perspective than has generally been adopted in critical reactions to the films.

In Chapter 3 I wanted to extend this discussion via a reading of one form of excess in Lynch's work: tears. For here using Joan Copjec's Lacanian reading of melodrama and crying allows us to read these scenes as providing for a form of empathetic response in respect of the alienated nature of post-Enlightenment subjectivity. The extracts analysed signify how Lynch's use of tears can be read as much more than simply regressive sentimentality. In addition, Copjec's analyses allow us to consider the implications of tears in cross or multi-generic texts which combine, *inter alia*, melodrama and *noir* to ascertain how tears function both in an historic setting and also in contemporary cultural discourse. This chapter also brought to the fore the very different approaches to reading tears and sentimentality between Theory and Post-Theory, in which I suggested that the paucity of the latter's (current) engagement with the detailed complexities of the subject greatly limited its critical effectiveness.

In Chapter 4, Los Angeles, Hollywood cinema and the road came together in a ride down the various lost highways of *noir*. By reading a number of films from European art house cinema, to *noir* and films from the 1960s and 1970s, the use of vehicles in Lynch's work attested to the overdetermined relationship between various forms of cinematic and vehicular technologies. As such, I sought to consider Lynch's use of vehicles away from the many, existing commentaries on the genre of road movies, to reflect upon the changing ways in which cars and the road have conjoined many different ideas, and the ways in which both have been mutually involved in the exploration of time and movement. In addition to this, by relating Lynch's use of cars to Parveen Adams' essay on *Crash*, I came to a tentative conclusion that there is a different order of cinematic symptom in Lynch's film which keeps the spectator on an endless, lost highway as opposed to a total collapse of time and space which she reads in *Crash*. Thus, I suggested, Lynch's films keep us on the road of representation, but one in which the Real erupts and challenges the hegemony of much, mainstream cinema.

Chapter 5 explored the interrelationship between trauma and cinema to consider their mutual concerns. Starting with a reading of *Hiroshima mon amour* and ending with *Lost Highway*, *Mulholland Drive* and Christopher Nolan's *Memento*, we came to an understanding that the experimentation of the modernist avant-garde was now incorporated within the mainstream (or edges of it anyhow), but that the traumas offered by contemporary cinema are somewhat different from those of the European art cinema of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Now the spectator's relationship to trauma is so widespread that trauma and tragedy surrounds us all and are paradoxically unrecognizable. This is why I read Lynch's films alongside a range of others. This gave us the opportunity to consider how different forms of cinematic representations gave voice to aspects of trauma which provide for different interpretative work from spectators, and which have changed significantly over time. So that, for instance, the use of the flashback as a cinematic trope is used, albeit differently, in *Hiroshima mon amour* and *Detour*; and is replaced by a dissimilar form of traumatic representation in the contemporary examples chosen. Here, the spectator's relationship to trauma and the protagonist's "knowledge" and understanding of it is analogous via the form and content of that representation. As such, the narrative framework cannot be resolved as in classical narratives, nor can we enter into a kind of forgetting without the consequent or necessary reintegration of remembering which Cowie suggests is available to the spectator in *Hiroshima mon Amour*, and which permits trauma to pass into memory and thereby some form of resolution. Now, what these contemporary examples tell us about current notions of cinematic exhibition and spectatorship, which is different from the earlier examples, is something I want to ponder. Because we do not appear to have access to any such resolution, the narratives leave us unsettled, dislocated and out of place. Now what can that mean? Or, rather, what is the impact of this for the contemporary spectator?

Chapter 6 took the ontologically uncanny nature of film and Lynch's exploitation of the potential of the medium to make strange its familiarity and to make familiar its

strangeness, to suggest that cinema and psychoanalysis are inextricably intertwined. However, this is not to suggest that there is some direct connection between them which would allow for banal comparisons to be made. However, their interlocking or parallel histories allow us to think about their specificities in relation to modern and postmodern subjectivity and spectatorship. Thus, these discourses or modes of address grant us the opportunity to think about the ways in which film can work on the spectator, or rather how the uncanny is a reading effect in which the spectator is caught up in the familiar strangeness of the text, and that the two cannot be separated out in any straightforward sense. This, then, provides a link with the previous chapter, to suggest that contemporary spectatorship, while it does contain the seeds of its avant-garde predecessors, offers a somewhat different experience in which film text and spectatorship are intertwined in a reconfigured manner, as a form of Möbius aesthetic. Similarly, this allows us to consider the changing relationship between capitalist production and consumption over the period since the beginnings of cinema and to consider where we are now, and Lynch's place within these debates.

Stitch marks

The connections between story, pictures and affective colours, as Schefer refers to them, provide, in Lynch's films, an overdetermined relationship between high art and popular culture, and the complexities and problematics of their interrelationship. For narrative is not the only, or perhaps predominant, framework for these films. The relationship between the films, early "primitive" filmmaking and avant-garde art means that images and sounds are as important as the narrative trajectory. Indeed the differing elements come up against each other to disrupt the normalization of film in the Hollywood tradition. This is apparent from Lynch's early films while training in fine art at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia in the late 1960s. He decided to work with film because he wanted to make "film paintings" and he "imagined a world in which painting would be in perpetual motion" (quoted in Chion,

1995, p.10). This training in fine art gives us insights into the association between painting and avant-garde film which he was exposed to in his student days and which continues in the mature work where these concerns are interwoven with explorations (or deconstructions) of narrative and genre patterns.

Rich tapestry

Throughout this dissertation I have sought to weave together cinema and psychoanalysis as two forms of discourse or modes of modernity which came into being at roughly the same time at the end of the nineteenth century, and thereby to consider where cinema is now and Lynch's place within it in relation to these discursive formations. These considerations of how psychoanalysis and cinema are mutually implicated, or woven together historically, centre on crucial concepts of spectatorship and subjectivity in relation to the filmic text. By considering these points I want to place them within an historical setting, as this seems to me crucial to an understanding of them and their operations, both at the end of the nineteenth century and now.

For instance, Vicky Lebeau (2001, p. 45) writes, in relation to apparatus theory, that "To push the point, the unconscious is the condition of cinema, essential to the act of watching a film". If that is the case then a Post-Theory cognitivist approach is not able to provide a detailed enough reading of film texts. I did not intend, at the outset, to be playing off Theory against Post-Theory, but as I kept coming up against the latter in my research and readings I felt that there was a need to confront or deal with their objections to Theory (and by this I, as the Post-Theorists do, am really referring to psychoanalysis, particularly in its Lacanian mode). As I have referred to the work of the Post-Theorists at various points throughout this dissertation, I want to pick out their main concerns and theoretical approach which calls for rationalist approaches to the study of film without recourse to unconscious explanations. David Bordwell (Bordwell and Carroll, 1996) suggests that psychoanalytic approach might be used if a rational explanation fails, but implicit in this is an assumption that this will not be

necessary. However, as Cubitt (2004, p. 4, and see chapter 5, p. 139) points out, all films fail the reality test and are somewhat uncanny. As such readings which explore, in detail, the psychological and philosophical aspects of the uncanny seem, to me, to be more satisfactory than ones that skirt over these issues in an attempt to provide straightforward rationalist and cognitivist explanations. And whilst Elsaesser's and Buckland's (2000) adoption of such a cognitivist reading of *Lost Highway* clearly sets out how that position can be used to provide a reading of such a film, there is something unsatisfactory, to me, about its inability to fully deal with the complexities of the uncanny elements in that film – that this approach is not sufficient to account for the intricacies of the texts. Instead, I have invoked Sarah Kofman's work, amongst others, to suggest that psychoanalytic aesthetics can provide the grounds for reading the overdetermined complexities of these texts that go beyond purely middle-ground rationalist approaches.

And I note, as I reread these chapters, that there is something unsettling about trying to fix the uncanny into a formal chapter, as it exceeds the limits of that framework. References to the word abound in elusive forms throughout all of the chapters, which is, perhaps, as it should be, as in its indeterminacy the uncanny cannot be fixed down into place; it exceeds its boundaries and breaks down the distinction between inside and outside (chapters). I also noted that references to the Möbius strip keep reappearing throughout, and I wondered whether this was applicable to all of Lynch's films. And then I thought that it did not really matter if it was not strictly accurate because it acts, for me at least, as a useful organizational metaphor for the spectator's relationship to most of these texts. Indeed the notion of topological structures which permeate Lacan's later work and Lynch's narrative frameworks seem to be most appropriate in readings of these films.

Underpinning my approach, or areas of interest, is the shared histories of cinema and psychoanalysis, which I think can provide for readings of both, alone and together, which may tell us about their "symbiotic relationship" as Laura Marcus terms it (quoted in Lebeau, 2001,

p.118) in relation to the shock of the modern experienced in their origins, and their relationship to the present. As Lebeau writes:

In this context, too, the concepts of shock and trauma central to the representation of the modern in both literature and cinema can become a new point of contact with psychoanalysis – *its* engagement with the vicissitudes of trauma and pleasure in symptom, in dream and in fantasy.

(Lebeau, 2001, p.118)

For the shock of the modern and distracted alienation presented by the new technologies of viewing provided by cinema are inextricably linked to the development of Marx's commodity fetishism, where as Cubitt (2004, p.2-3) puts it, "The historical study of the object of film is then also a study of the evolution of the commodity form...[and that]Film is uniquely situated to reveal the inner workings of the commodity, since it was for most of the last century the most popular, as it is now still the most strategic medium". And as Cubitt and Friedberg (1993) amongst others point out, there was first the proto-cinema of railway travel where citizens were presented with rapidly changing images from their seated viewing positions, to the cinema where stationary onlookers were presented with the illusion of movement which were initially received, as Gunning puts it, as a spectacle of astonishment. But, missing here is an acknowledgement of the importance of sound (firstly sound to accompany the visuals and then diegetic/nondiegetic sound) as well as images in these new technologies which incorporated the dialectics of magic *and* positivism, as I have discussed it in chapter 6 in relation to the ontological uncanniness of film and its consistent realization in Lynch's films.

Cinema thus provides a specific case study of modernity in which new technologies come together with the development of leisure time, and as Cubitt (2004, p.7) remarks, "by the late 1920s it would become apparent that the time of consumption was as vital to economic growth as the time of production". Cinema thus developed its narrative trajectory out of the fairground, literature and theatre which gave us, in due course, particularly as émigré directors

fled to America from Nazi Germany, *film noir*, which as I have tried to show in chapter 4, came to provide the aesthetic means by which the complexities, contradictions and ambiguities of Hollywood and the cinema business could be allegorically played out in these tales of urban disease. As such, contemporary films such as *Lost Highway* and *Mulholland Drive* continue to develop these ideas or notions into the postmodern present. Now, if what Mike Davis (1990, p.44, and see chapter 4) says is true that the contemporary *noirs* provide for “a supersaturation of corruption that fails any longer to outrage or even interest” then what is going on? What has happened between the initial shock of modernity and current ennui? Because a form of world weariness was apparently there in the birth of modernity, in the *flâneur*’s languid interaction with Paris in the days of the nineteenth century arcades. To try and understand the relationship between the then, of the origins of modernity and cinema, with the now of Lynch’s films, requires the assistance of theorists who can straddle these divides. That is why I have invoked Walter Benjamin’s work, particularly in chapter 2, where I was seeking to read one scene of *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* which has haunted and kept me spellbound for years. But Benjamin also allows me to consider this extract within the much wider context of cinema, modernity and postmodernity. By using *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* we can rethink Lynch’s place within a reading of tragedy from the baroque up to the postmodern.

In the so-called postmodern condition where leisure time is more readily available (for those who can afford it) and where there is a superegoic injunction to enjoy and consume, pastiche and form without content is supposedly the order of the day. For several commentators (see the introductory chapter) Lynch’s work personifies such an approach. But, I want to consider the, potentially at least, polymorphous nature of these texts, to keep them open to interpretation rather than seek to close them down. Because I think such readings only take us part of the way towards understanding how and why they work, or fail to work, as they do for the various commentators. Rather than thinking there is a wrong (reactionary) way of

looking perhaps we could rephrase the terms towards thinking about what kind of curiosity is mobilized by such works. Writing this brings to mind Sharon Willis's essay on *Wild at Heart*, referred to in the introductory chapter, where she says "Lynch hates women's bodies; *his* camera is kindest to the dead female body and most vicious to the maternal one...Lula's body is treated as sadistically as Marietta's, but in a more sanitized manner" (Willis, 1997, p.149, emphasis added). What I want to do is to draw a different form or level of conclusion from this and other comments about these works; or, to seek to understand how they interrelate to a much wider discussion about the role of women in cinema, modernity and postmodernity; and here, Benjamin, Lacan, Kristeva and Bronfen, amongst others, can help to read how woman was/is positioned as Other in these contexts. And all of these issues can be seen to come together around the uncanny and the Lacanian *objet (petit) a*².

Unpicking

As we have seen in Chapter 6, silence, solitude and darkness are three key elements of the uncanny as proposed by Freud, but as we have also seen his discussion of these points falls away abruptly at the end of his essay of 1919. Two of these at least are also key elements of cinema spectatorship – solitude and darkness – at least in the cinema. In addition, silence for me is an integral requirement of cinema viewing. I cannot stand people talking during a film, yet in the film art of Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller's *The Muriel Lake Incident*, referred to in the introduction, the sounds of whispered voices from the "audience" of that film is a vital and necessary component of the experience, and perhaps indicates that there is always the tacit acknowledgement of the other audience members in our seeming solitude in the darkness of the auditorium. Solitude though, even in an imaginary sense, does appear to me to be a necessary component of the viewing experience, as even with someone else, in the darkness the feeling of being a solitary intruder onto the screen of representation allows for a greater degree of involvement with the complexities of identificatory positions available.

Here the changing conceptions of spectatorship seem to me to be of vital interest. I have taken my position on this largely from Joan Copjec's (1994) essay 'The Orthopsychic Subject: Film Theory and the Reception of Lacan'. By repositioning Lacanian film theory away from its emphasis on the mirror stage to his later detailed work on the gaze she argues that:

For beyond everything that is displayed to the subject, the question is asked, "What is being concealed from me? What in this graphic space does not show, does not stop *not* writing itself?" This point at which something appears to be *invisible*, this point at which something appears to be missing from representation, some meaning left unrevealed, is the point of the Lacanian gaze. It marks the *absence* of a signified; it is an *unoccupiable* point, not, as film theory claims, because it figures an unrealizable ideal but because it indicates an impossible real'

(Copjec, 1994, p.34)

As she goes on to say, "The subject is the effect of the impossibility of seeing what is lacking in representation, what the subject, therefore, wants to see" (Copjec, 1994, p. 34). So contrary to film theory's readings of Lacan in the 1970s and 1980s, we are asked to reformulate the spectator's relations to the image to incorporate the theory of the gaze being located "behind" the image and not "in front of" it. As such she concludes that in:

Lacan 'orthopsychism' – one wishes to retain the term in order to indicate the subject's fundamental dependence on the faults it finds in representation and in itself – grounds the subject. The desire that it precipitates *transfixes* the subject, albeit in a conflictual place, so that all the subject's visions and revisions, all its fantasies, merely circumnavigate the absence that anchors the subject and impedes its progress.

(Copjec, 1994, p.38)

This approach thereby delves beneath the intractable impasse of the "male" gaze which has sometimes been applied to Lynch's work in a heavy handed and unsubtle fashion. Because, on an elementary level Lynch is obviously sussed enough to "know" what is being presented in these films. As Laura Mulvey (often pointed out as the originator of the "male" gaze argument) writes, *Blue Velvet* is Freud-by-numbers and openly plays with psychoanalytic

concepts. But, at the same time, there is a going beyond the obvious, or rather a surface attraction, in these texts that calls out for analysis. Because when the strategies used are so overt then what we need to ask in respect of each of these films is what is actually being presented on the surface of each particular act of *parole*? What does it mean when someone deliberately seeks to employ specific concepts in filmic form and plays with them in such an overt manner?

As I hope the chapter on the uncanny has pointed out, Lacan's *objet a* provides a privileged means of understanding the subject of modernity's relation to itself and its representations. In chapter 3 on tears as excess I tried to provide a reading of the thoroughly modern notion of crying which Copjec argues comes about at the end of the eighteenth century, because of the new genre of melodrama which concurrently came in to being with the arrival of the citizen in the public space, who was cut off from "his" innermost being. So, citizenship came about at a cost and this cost marked the crucial lack of recognition between citizens. And now we can perhaps link in Schefer's comments about the illusion of cinema as one of being a solitary relationship, because here, in the cinema auditorium, the spectator, in its solitary position looks for the gaze, one of the (lost) *objets a*, which presents itself behind the image not in front of it, as one of the lost, impossibly objects (together with the voice). And again we can see the Post-Theorists or cognitivist's errors in their (mis)readings of Lacan. But, to be fair, their readings might be taken back to film theory's use of Lacan's mirror stage in the 1970s and 1980s, but they certainly appears to be based on readings of secondary rather than primary sources. But in the Post-Theory work one comes across a large proportion of readings which suggests that Lacan's work suggests a clear and fixed sense of identification with the image based on the male gaze; whereas, the work I have tried to invoke in my readings of these films is based around the more complex ramifications of using the Lacanian gaze as *objet a* to read film, and in particular, these films I am concerned with here.

As Buci-Glucksmann (1994, pp. 100-101) points out, Benjamin's analysis of the petrification of the female body in modernity, in which allegory is united with the commodity "partially overlaps with that of Lacan: 'The body as final signified is the corpse or the *stone phallus*'"³. In chapter 2, the reading of the final scene from *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* provided a condensed opportunity to think about allegory and images of petrified and dead women which goes way beyond that example, and obliterates any sense of holding on to Lynch as the author and arbiter of the text. As Buci-Glucksmann (1994, p.100) goes on to state, Benjamin becomes an actor in his readings of Baudelaire, as I hope to do, in a more modest way, in my readings on Lynch. Or, perhaps it would be more appropriate to refer to Royle's (2003, p. 81) remark that writing on film makes one an extra.

Losing the thread

The Lacanian concept of the *objet a* can therefore provide a means to think about and to link cinema together with spectatorship and the relationship to modernity and postmodernity via the uncanny. The uncanny as Dolar (1991, p. 5) informs us "is located at the very core of psychoanalysis" and, as I have shown, cinema: the two are mutually intertwined. Dolar (1991, p.6) goes on to suggest that: "'One could simply say that it is the pivotal point around which psychoanalytic concepts revolve, the point that Lacan calls object small *a* and which he himself considered his most important contribution to psychoanalysis".

To reiterate the point made in chapter 6, the object *a* "is most intimately linked with and produced by the rise of modernity. What seems to be a leftover is actually a product of modernity, its counterpart" (Dolar, 1991, p.7). This counterpart or supplement is manifest in technologies such as the photograph, phonograph and cinema where magic meets with positivism. It is at this point that the rise of Enlightenment rationality actually produces its own uncanny supplement, where the ambiguities and paradoxes inherent in the Enlightenment project call forth its own unbidden and unwanted ghosts. It is, as in the phrase Žižek (2000)

uses elsewhere, the “inherent transgression” within rationality. It is the pivotal point, where, in its supposed exclusion of irrationality, the Enlightenment project actually produces it surreptitiously as an unbidden ghostly presence within its home. It is also here that psychoanalysis as a discourse originates, as Copjec makes clear in chapter 3, to account for these parts of the psyche which are repressed or hidden as the modern subject comes into being. In previous centuries ghosts, hauntings and demons were perceived as external to individuals, now they come to be seen as internal manifestations. And cinema provides a space where the psychical complexities of fantasy can be offered as a form of temporary release from the increasingly constrained mode of life within capitalist production.

The unconscious itself, as an edge or limit, is discovered (or invented) by Freud at that point when the citizen or subject becomes aware of its lack in being, which coincides with the emergence of cinema as a technology for permitting a form of art and aesthetics which allows, nay requires, unconscious identifications. This new form, coincident with the emergence of leisure time, creates a space which, as Schefer (1995, p.112) tells us, gives room for “this artificial solitude a part of us [which] is porous to the effects of meaning without ever being able to be born into signification through language”. And in this space all the paradoxical aspects of modernity are simultaneously revealed, concealed and congealed via the new uncanny technology.

Converging here are different examples of art forms: magic and circus “trickery”; literature and new forms of writing via newspapers and magazines, and other ephemeral forms of modernity; in new spaces – firstly shops and then theatres. The latter spaces are themselves uncanny as they sought to make the new medium more respectable, but, at the same time, became simultaneously familiar and yet strange in that the images presented could not be fully tamed within the new exhibition spaces⁴. The possibilities for cinema were therefore initially wide and varied and only later did they come to be codified within the constraints of narrative and genre conventions manufactured in Hollywood. But, at the same time, counter trends from

European cinema and avant-garde practice explored, in other ways, the creative potential of the new medium. And Lynch's films combine these traditions in ways which explore and exploit the form and content of conventions, to problematize them in creative ways, linking together the Gothic, melodrama, *noir* and Surrealism with existing narrative and genre codes and conventions of mainstream cinema.

In addition to the foregoing Dolar (1991, p. 19) also points out that "The uncanny is always at stake in ideology – ideology basically consists of a social attempt to integrate the uncanny". But rather than try to assign meanings to the uncanny, to fix its signified "psychoanalysis differs from other interpretations by its insistence on the formal level of the uncanny rather than on its content" (Dolar, 1991, p.20). He goes on to make the important argument that "Psychoanalysis was the first to point out systematically the uncanny dimension pertaining to the very project of modernity, not in order to make it disappear, but in order to maintain it, to hold it open" (Dolar, 1991, p.23). And for him the difference between the uncanny in modernity and postmodernity is that in the latter there "is a new consciousness about the uncanny as a fundamental dimension of modernity", and as the accompanying footnote makes plain it is "in contemporary popular culture that displays the greatest sensitivity to this shift by its insistence on and 'working through' the 'fundamental fantasies'" (Dolar, 1991, p.23).

When we come to look at Lacan's many formulations of the *objet a* we cannot fail to see how it is inextricably tied to the notion of woman, indeed how a woman is a symptom *of a man*, in the sense that a woman can only ever enter the psychic economy of men as a fantasy *objet a*, the cause of their desire. And so much film has centred itself upon woman as *objet a* by giving over this space of fantasy and day-dreaming to the lost object. By its very nature film is itself "lost" and the (im)possibility of (re)finding the object of desire is manifest in the technology itself, by its elusive lost presence which is based on absence and a lost desire to "see" the truth of its representations. In vain the spectator seeks out the lost object, the cause

of desire, and like a good dream, it is searched for time and time again, in the many permutations of desire which the industry and the technology create in an ever increasing spiral of films.

Yet, so many of these films fail, as Cubitt amongst others notes, to push fantasy far enough, to fully develop the scenarios of desire, in an ideological attempt to restrain the excesses of capitalism. It was not for nothing that Lacan noted that Marx invented the symptom and linked this to surplus enjoyment. But, whereas most mainstream films fail to fully push their fantasy scenarios far enough, Lynch's films often do. And it is at these points where they are simultaneously commended and condemned. In the introductory chapter I was struck by the contradictory nature of some of the critical responses – of those who spend a great deal of time acknowledging the aesthetic strategies of the films, while simultaneously denouncing the content. This form of disavowal strikes me as important and revealing, and which calls out for further comment. For it seems to suggest that there is an unconscious attraction to the work, but, at the same time, there is an intellectual, rational, pulling back because of the depicted subject matter, so that the “truth” of the content is regarded as separate and unpalatable.

Picking up the pieces

Writing this thesis comes at an interesting, exciting, but simultaneously unclear time for theory and theoretical modes of address. The “certainties” of earlier forms of critical engagement with art and film have, over the last few years, come in for questioning, and at times during this process I have found myself somewhat at sea searching for the spotlight of theory to guide me. Over the period of this research I have found myself coming across a variety of theoretical and counter-theoretical approaches, and there was a sense in which I felt that I had to navigate down and across many currents to find a course which permitted a more free-flowing approach in line with the texts under consideration. Not that I was searching for

calm, still, waters, because there is a great deal of enjoyment and greater intellectual results to be had from more disturbed channels.

In his introduction to *After Criticism*, one of the series of “New Interventions in Art History”, Gavin Butt (2005, pp. 4-5) makes the point that there is a new unease at the heritage of criticism left by postmodernism itself, in which theory has been institutionalized. But that a way round this is by an acknowledgement that criticism “in order to *remain* criticism, of necessity has to situate itself *para* – against and/or beside – the *doxa* of received wisdom” (Butt, 2005, p.5). He goes on to suggest that Derrida’s remarks in *Politics of Friendship*, in which the possibilities of communicative failure may allow for a new politics to come. I would like to use the quotation Butt takes from Derrida as this may point a way forward in my own deliberations:

But we cannot, and we must not, exclude the fact that when someone teaches, publishes, preaches, orders, promises, prophesies, informs or communicates, some force in him or her is also striving *not* to be understood, approved, accepted in consensus – not immediately, not fully, and therefore not in the immediacy and plenitude of tomorrow, etc...It is enough that the paradoxical structure of the condition of possibility be taken into account...for me to hope to be understood beyond all dialectics of misunderstanding, etc., the possibility of failure must, in addition, not be simply an accidental edge of the condition, but its haunting.

(Derrida, quoted in Butt, 2005, p.6)

In addition to this, certainly in my case, there is the sense of not fully understanding what I’m saying. As Royle (2003) points out in his chapter on teaching, it is always impossible to know in advance what the learning outcomes of a lecture or lesson might be and that learning comes after the fact, that it is an operation of deferred action. As such, what I can gleam here is, at present, only the beginnings of what might emerge at some time in the future. And this is part of the pleasure of learning, not just for now, but for what might emerge in the future and where it might lead one.

Paradoxically, “the possibility of failure” allows for greater communicative possibilities than the teleological certainty of some forms of ossified theory. At an earlier stage in this project I would have been (and was) mortified when I came across such words – they struck arrows of terror into my theoretical armour. Yet, as I continued on with this task the possibility of failure, or of not being able to say everything struck me again, but this time with joy. For not wanting to be definitive may allow for a greater degree of interaction with others who may or may not share my passion about these films. The dialogue does not have to be negatively figured according to critical viewpoints. For instance, feminist critics will not doubt take me to task for my comments about the possibilities of reading Lynch’s treatment of women in another way which suggests that these films take their fundamental fantasies to their irrational conclusions and are therefore much more than just negatively figured misogynistic statements.

To see failure as a, paradoxical, form of success brings me back to Beckett and others for whom failure is the best we can hope for, and in Derrida’s analysis, allows for possibilities of politics yet to come. Ossified theory can only see what it wants it see, its teleological framework ignores or disregards that which falls outside its narrow parameters. In contrast, open, creative theory permits new questions to be asked as a means of questioning received wisdom. Like a young child who repeatedly asks “why”, or like Renee Madison who says the same question to Pete Drayton in the Lost Highway motel while being fucked by someone else, the word in its iteration and repetition is annoying and yet insistent, demanding a reply and not giving up until one is given, nor even then. It is a hysterical response which demands to be heard, demands to know and test the “master’s” knowledge. It calls all into question and does not accept any reply but constantly tests what it is told.

This, for Jean-Michel Rabaté, is what properly constitutes, as the title of his book points out, *The Future of Theory*. He writes, “Unlike Kant’s reason, Theory can never be pure because it is always lacking, and this weakness is in fact its strength” (Rabaté, 2002, p.9). This

acknowledgement of lack, like Derrida's of the possibility of failure, asks us to rethink what theory can and should do, to allow "it" to remain open to the complex interweaving of critical discourse in an ever expanding semiosis.

It is through Lacan's discourse of the hysteric that Rabaté suggests that theory may continue to question the "master's" knowledge, to unsettle and dislodge. And he calls for "sexy theory in that it always retains a libidinal edge, but at the same time it cannot bypass historical and political contexts" (Rabaté, 2002, pp. 16-17). As he points out, the discourse of the hysteric appears as the result of the interaction between a divided subject and two terms: S1 – the master-signifier which will replace the lost object, and S2 – unconscious knowledge which underwrites the pursuit of intellectual interests (Rabaté, 2002, pp. 15-16). In some of the existing responses to Lynch there is a sense in which the certainties of the critics close down these libidinal responses to the films. Rather than fully engaging with whatever it is that draws these critics to these works, there is an intellectual, rationalizing of the irrational and excessive components of the cinematic signifiers.

Referring to the avant-garde's relationship to theory, Rabaté makes the point that "Benjamin is indispensable for Theory precisely because his central obsession was to define modernity (a modernity that is not without its shadowy double of nostalgia) without having to believe in the myth of progress as Adorno did in the name of Marxism" (Rabaté, 2002, p.64). And it is Benjamin's work on modernity that allows us to consider Lynch's place within (post)modernity, where the shadowy underside, or supplement, of the myth of progress is displayed to us in the ruin of nature and the corruption of culture as in *Twin Peaks* for example. Referring to Heidegger, Rabaté (2002, p. 115) suggests that "Theory is always caught up between comedy and tragedy". Similarly, Lynch's films straddle that same divide, making us aware of the comedic in the tragic and vice versa, offering complex interweaving of the sacred and the profane, the insightful and the banal.

Quilting points, reconsidered

This dissertation has provided me with a sustained period in which to explore my initial love of Lynch's films, to ascertain what it is I love about them and how my thoughts and feelings relate to others who have commented upon the works. It has lead to a form of solitary and silent communication with the words of others. In relation to the field of film studies, I come away with a renewed sense of the importance of film being sited within the broader context of its socio-historical framework and its relation to other modes and technologies of representation. The specialization of the field, a necessity for its particular and singular workings to be investigated, also suggests that there may, at times, be something limiting in its subject specificity if the relationship of film to other cultural products is not fully considered. That film came into being, as does any technological invention, through the incorporation of older technologies into the "new" – and that the "new" is never entirely "new", calls for a (re)consideration of the interlinking of film with other cultural artifacts. So, I suggest that what I have provided is a sense of the importance of considering cultural artifacts not only as specialized products of their own particular field, but also by reference to the wider culture from which they come, which allows for a greater sense of engagement with the socio-historical and cultural framework from which these objects arise.

The myth of theoretical distance, of the Cartesian all-knowing, God-guaranteed Gaze is also one that calls out for reconsideration. I started this work by being wary of my position of over-proximity to the work, as if my personal engagement with the work would prohibit the distance required to "apply" theory, to think about these works effectively without being seduced by them. Now I come to a realisation that one needs to be aware of one's investment in the work, from whatever angle one writes. There is no real sense of objectivity, or subjectivity. As Rabaté (2002, pp.16-17), referred to above writes, the discourse of the hysteric is one in which the interaction between a divided, split subject and the two terms, S1 and S2, is one in which unconscious knowledge which underwrites intellectual interests helps

to replace the lost object with the master-signifier, means that the pursuit of knowledge is itself an active, resourceful principle; it is a creative act from the arena of theory. In this space the attentive reading and viewing of the filmic texts enables the researcher to fully investigate the object of the study from the position of one who is passionately attached to it, but who can replace this initial attraction with a more considered, theoretical viewpoint by re-considering the work alongside the various critical response to arrive at a new, provisional point of knowledge. The work itself acts as the initial starting-point, being alive and attentive to it is vital if the bridge can be made between an individualized response and a more fully thought out reconsideration of the work in relation to the field of study and current cultural viewpoints. However, as I appropriate theory I do so with interest, from a particular point of view. At the same time, alternative and opposing viewpoints may provide for ways of thinking which force one to consider points outside the framework from which one works, to develop a praxis which confronts head-on problems and unpalatable questions that confront the researcher. This is not to say that one should give up one's investment in a particular theoretical position, but rather, that one should actively confront challenges to that position in order to enrich the theory and praxis from which one works. This, in turn, can reinvigorate theory in relation to the demands and challenges presented by cultural products in the contemporary setting. In this way, theory is never predetermined, but is always receptive to the works it seeks to discuss.

The filmic texts may be fixed (although celluloid is rapidly deteriorating) but one's critical responses may change, and the provisional and incomplete nature of writing about art needs to be understood for the positive means in which it can be harnessed to a constant, and consistent, reevaluation of the objects of study. The individual responses of each commentator are themselves part of an ever increasing web of critical discourse in which the complexities of the texts under consideration are open for investigation from a variety of positions, whose specificities, particularities, prejudices and biases offer the opportunity for theory and its others to interact in ever-creative ways.

By appropriating theory in the way I have done, it becomes clear that meaning is never entirely free-floating, that the quilting points of meaning come into being through the interaction of the hermeneutics of close reading and listening to both the filmic texts and the critical interactions with those texts. And maybe these quilting points are themselves multifaceted planes of connections whose interrogation may lead to other, new ways of integrating theory with practice in line with the demands of our era.

Tidying up ends

Where does all this leave me in my deliberations on film and writing? If, as Royle (2003, pp. 81-82) argues, critical writing is always a supplement and so is driven by the desire to accomplish the impossible – this must be true of writing on any work of art. Film's specific forms of identification of this impossibility therefore must have something to do with the specificities or possibilities of film writing and their interrelationship. This connection between artistic form and critical responses reminds me of the work of Mark Lewis whose name uncannily is the same as that of the central character in Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* to which he has added his own "take". However, I want to refer to another of his films entitled *The Pitch* (1998) in which the artist stands under a camera placed high above him at a railway station and reads out a text in defence of the lowly placed extra within the film industry. At the same time as members of the travelling public walk past they too become unknowing "extras" in a film of which they do not realize that they are part of. Being a part of a film while not being aware of one's participation strikes me as apposite to a form of writing that seeks to extend film not close it down, in which the writing can become part of that film, by participating in its continuing life.

Rabaté (2002, p. 16) states that "since it retains a libidinal edge, Theory should not be boring; it should move, seduce, entrance, keep desire in motion, in other words, it should be 'sexy'". Likewise, in an essay on *Twin Peaks* entitled 'Detective Deleuze and the Case of

Slippery Signs' Stephen O'Connell (1995, p. 15) quotes Deleuze when he states that one should "Give back to an artist a little of the joy, the energy, the love of life and politics that he knew how to invent". And as Theory interlocks the private with the public, the psyche with the polis, the solitary illusion of cinema, in Schefer's words, opens up a part of us that offers a possibility of becoming via a technology based on presence and absence, which calls forth the ghosts of Enlightenment rationality in all their glorious, libidinal, *jouissance*, in which writing can offer other traces of interaction with the films.

Film, as Barthes and so many others have told us, gives us the ghosts of the dead, but which in its momentary reenactment brings back, flickeringly, to life what has gone but which can be called forth again via cinematic rebirth and via video and DVD. I often wonder, as I take these films from their cases, just what these little caskets mean and what they offer. And if writing is simultaneously a form of keeping alive while acknowledging death, then perhaps video and DVD can be thought of a form of relic, whereby a separation can be made between the filmic act in the cinema and its reenactment by other means elsewhere. Because these ubiquitous objects which, on one hand, mark the extension of capitalism's ability to make us repay for our pleasures as pure commodities, at the same time, contain reliquary power which can be reactivated, or brought back to life at will, and are thereby themselves uncanny phenomena by which the magical strangeness of film and the commodity can be doubly reactivated and experienced time and time again.

By so doing the shock and pleasure of watching these films again may allow for a reconfiguration of what initially attracted us to them in the first place. From the initial shock of the first film screenings at the end of the nineteenth century, through to the current supersaturation of the commodity form, Lynch's films may allow us to pass beyond contemporary ennui through their excessive playing out of cliché and postmodern distraction, to afford us the possibility of thinking anew, and of working towards fresh possibilities. Like the incipit from Schefer with which I started this conclusion, the artificial solitude in which we

are susceptible to meaning without signification through language, offers the possibility of rethinking or feeling anew the aphasia of feeling in our social being.

At this point, I am reminded of something else that Schefer writes about film:

So the duration of passions (what Kierkegaard used to call the character of an alternative man) can be measured only by the remnants of images – not by their cinematic duration, but by the power they have to remain, repeat, or recur.
(Schefer, 1995, p.114)

And these images have for me a great power to remain, repeat and recur; and so it would seem for others, whatever forms of disavowal are put forward. This seems to suggest that these films call for greater critical treatments, where the various “extra” voices might be heard, and where communication and discussion might lead to renewed ways of thinking and dealing with our passionate attachments and distractions.

For while my approach takes on board various theoretical positions what strikes me is the way in which, even, or in particular, those approaches which seek to distance themselves from psychoanalysis, is just how indebted they are to it as a discourse. So, for instance, whilst Schefer is not a psychoanalytic thinker, many of his ideas about film can be seen to interlink or relate to contemporary psychoanalytic ways of thinking about film, albeit in other ways. Similarly, while Derrida and deconstruction, and Deleuze and Guattari contest psychoanalytic theory their work, at the same time, is heavily indebted to it. This is something that Royle (2003), although adopting a deconstructive approach, makes plain throughout his book on the uncanny and why we will/should read Freud for a long time to come. We can also see that although the Post-Theory work seeks to distance itself from psychoanalytic points of view that it has to dialectically interact with it as a discourse. So, while these debates continue there is an ongoing sense of intellectual development of ideas which can only be a healthy thing. And I would contend that Lynch’s films provide us with a complex body of work through which many important theoretical issues can be thought and written about. So, we need to go beyond

binaries of good/bad, reactionary/progressive to interrogate the *points de capiton* where meanings might be seen to reside currently, but where they can also be rethought as the unthought, “as that impossibility of thinking which doubles or hollows out the inside” (Deleuze, 1988, p. 97). A theoretical openness or promiscuousness, without exclusion of what yet may come, may provide for a weaving together of differing theoretical approaches to lead to an increasingly developed sense of engagement with the vicissitudes of cultural artifacts.

Notes

1. Introduction: Towards a Palimpsest

1. “I don’t know if you’re a detective or a pervert” is the phrase that Sandy says to Jeffrey in *Blue Velvet* just before he lets himself into Dorothy’s flat. Tellingly, he replies, “That’s for me to know and you to find out.”
2. Dylan Evans is no longer a practicing Lacanian psychoanalyst. Until recently he was Senior Lecturer in Intelligent Autonomous Systems at the University of the West of England. As his biography on his website makes clear, he became disengaged with “the crazy ideas of Freud and Lacan” and moved into the “scientifically sound” area of evolutionary psychology. From there he moved into robotics. Further details are available at <http://www.dylan.org.uk/biography.html> [Accessed 14 August 2005]. Recently, a profile article in the Times Higher Education Supplement of April 21 2006 (p.9), explained that Evans has now left “academe to set up a learning community – based loosely on Plato’s Academy – in the Scottish Highlands.”
3. See Chapter 3, “‘Reality’ and the Real: Culture as Anamorphosis”, in Sarah Kay’s (2003) *Žižek: A Critical Introduction* for a discussion of Žižek’s treatment of the work of Hitchcock, Lynch and Kieślowski.
4. Žižek (2000, p.20) refers to this as Frank’s rather than Dorothy’s apartment, which I think is a parapraxis, but it may be a revealing one in that one can argue that this space *is*, in effect, Frank’s; or, at least, that it is “leased” to him as the stage for his theatrically impotent performances.
5. This part of the chapter links into a paper entitled “Frame by Frame: The ‘Film Paintings’ of David Lynch” that I delivered at the Association of Art Historians 27th Annual Conference: *Making Connections*, 29 March – 1 April 2001, held at Oxford Brooks University, in the session ‘Still/Moving Pictures: Art History and Film’. In the paper I used the notion of “film paintings” to read extracts from a number of Lynch’s films to problematize the *Auteur* Theory in relation to this body of work and its relationship to fine art practice and theory.
6. In the early stages of this research project I submitted a proposal entitled ‘Wrapped in (virtual) plastic and caught in a Lynchnet’ for the conference ‘Wild at Heart and Weird on Top: The films of David Lynch’, held at the University of Sheffield on 13 February 1999. Although not selected for the day’s events as the paper’s framework was outside of the proposed session topic areas, the organizers asked me to be on standby should any of the participants be unable to give their papers. As such, the initial work on Lynch and the Internet derives from this period, and it is interesting to see how sites have changed over the intervening period. The arrival, in 2003, of Lynch’s own web site, DavidLynch.com, has provided a new forum for a range of experimental work in film, animation, music and fine art.
7. The conference referred to was entitled ‘Theory as an Object: A one day conference exploring the legacy and future uses of psychoanalysis and poststructuralist theory in art history’, held at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London, 29 November 2003.

2. Ever Died? Ever Failed? No Matter. Die Again. Fail Again. Fail Better. Immanence and Transcendence in *Twin Peaks* (with apologies to Samuel Beckett)

1. The title of this chapter plays upon Samuel Beckett's well-known and much cited line from his novel *Worstward Ho!* (1984): "Ever Tried. Ever Failed. No Matter. Try Again. Fail Again. Fail Better."
2. In the film it is stated that Cooper is in the Black Lodge, but it is the ambiguity of the relationship between the Black and White Lodges and Cooper's "saintliness" which, partly, gives us the opportunity to read this location as a different space within the Black Lodge. In episode 18, Deputy Hawk explains that his people, i.e., the indigenous population of North America, believe that the White Lodge is a place "where the spirits that rule man and nature" dwell. He goes on to say that the Black Lodge is "the shadow self of the White Lodge," through which every spirit must pass "on the way to perfection". However, if the White Lodge is confronted "with less than perfect courage" annihilation is the result, (See Lavery, 1995, pp. 212, 236-237, 257-258 for plot details). 'The Waiting Room' hovers between both places and acts as a space for the film characters and the viewer to contemplate the melancholy beauty of a suspended state of becoming.
3. When I started relating this scene to other examples of angels in film I did a web search and came across a site entitled 'Hollywood Jesus: Pop Culture from a Spiritual Point of View', available from < http://www.hollywoodjesus.com/angels_in_films.htm > [Last accessed 05 June 2005]. On the site is a list of films featuring angels, but there is no mention of Lynch's work here. But, out of interest, the films referred to are: *I Married an Angel* (1942); *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946); *The Bishop's Wife* (1947); *Angels in the Outfield* (1951); *The Heavenly Kid* (1985); *Date with an Angel* (1987); *Wings of Desire* (1987); *Almost an Angel* (1990); *Faraway, So Close!* (1993); *Angels in the Outfield* (1994); *The Prophecy* (1995); *Michael* (1996); *The Preacher's Wife* (1996); *A Life Less Ordinary* (1997); *City of Angels* (1998); and *The Prophecy II* (1998).
4. In Rodley (1997, pp. 16-17 and p.20) Lynch says, "Francis Bacon is, to me, the main guy, the number one kinda hero painter. There's a lot of painters that I like. But for just the *thrill* of standing in front of a painting...I saw Bacon's show in the sixties at the Marlborough Gallery and it was really one of the most powerful things I ever saw in my life...Normally I only like a couple of years of a painter's work, but I like everything of Bacon's. The guy, you know, had the stuff." He goes on to say that "Edward Hopper is another guy I love, but more for cinema than for painting." At the Hopper Retrospective held at Tate Modern in 2004, a still of a partially dressed Dorothy in her apartment in *Blue Velvet* was used as one example of Hopper's influence on film.
5. In episode 16 of *Twin Peaks* following the death of Leland Palmer, Cooper, Sheriff Truman, Albert Rosenfeld and Major Briggs discuss what they have witnessed. Albert says "Maybe that's what BOB is, the evil that men do".
6. I use the term suture here to talk about the way the spectator is "held" by the images rather than the strict Lacanian sense in which Jacques-Alain Miller uses it in his article 'Suture (Elements of the Logic of the Signifier),' *Screen* 18, no. 4 (Winter 1977/78), pp.24-34.

7. In another reading of *Twin Peaks*, which I find conducive to the approach I am seeking to adopt, Sheli Ayers (2004, p.94) also uses Walter Benjamin's work to argue that: "As allegory, *Twin Peaks* moved towards this resurrection of affect, immersing viewers in a multi-layered, melodramatic world in which feeling could be reborn". This offers a riposte to those critics who argued that the series and film set the spectators at a knowing distance from the depicted events; that these knowledgeable and savvy spectators "got" the joke and responded accordingly; laughing at the kitsch and sentimentality depicted, without being affected by the content.
8. Žižek (2000, p.46, n.28) actually finds a point of agreement with Nochimson (1997, p.122) here, in that there is "also a phallic dimension to the twin personae of Little Man and Giant in the Red Room in 'Twin Peaks': the two anamorphically distorted versions of 'normal size' man, one too short, the other too large, like a penis in erection and non-erection. Their strange talk is also a speech which is anamorphically distorted, turned into a vocal version of the stain in Holbein's *Ambassadors*."
9. After Leland places Laura's body on the water and he goes into the Lodge there is a sequence of shots, one of which, immediately prior to her face being revealed, is a close-up of a monkey's face. This appears to function as an intertextual reference to Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). Lynch uses similar shots in *The Elephant Man*.

3. Reasons to Be Tearful: Snapshots of Lynchian Excess

1. If apologies for the title of Chapter 2 go to Samuel Beckett then similar apologies for the title of this chapter should go to the late Ian Drury and the Blockheads as it is a play on the title of their hit single 'Reasons to be Cheerful Part 3' (1979). A shortened version of this chapter entitled 'Reasons to be tearful: still and moving images' was presented at the 31st Annual Conference of the Association of Art Historians, held at the University of Bristol, 31 March – 2 April 2005, in the Session on 'Sentimentality'.
2. Joan Copjec's work on tears and melodrama has developed over a number of years. The quotation used comes from her most recent chapter on the subject entitled 'The Invention of Crying and the Antitheatrics of the Act', which is Chapter 4 in *Imagine There's No Woman: Ethics and Sublimation* (2004). Earlier versions have appeared in Copjec (1994 and 1999).
3. See Buci-Glucksmann (1994, p. 43) for her comments about Lacan's (1999) "suggestion of 'another side' to sexual pleasure [*jouissance*], a more female side in which the uncanny [*l'étrange*] merges with the angelic [*l'être-ange*]."
4. Copjec relates her analysis to Michael Fried's work on paintings of the period which, he states, marked a transition from "theatricality" to "absorption". She then argues that one way of accounting for this transition is achieved via Jacques-Alain Miller's (1977/78) essay on suture. It is not my intention to rely on Fried's distinctions in this chapter but only to allude to them. Indeed, Copjec uses these notions as her starting point for a discussion of Lacan's work. Richard Rushton (2004, p.227) has also applied Michael Fried's work to the analysis of film as a means of "encouraging new ways of thinking about cinema and seeing old debates in a new light", namely spectatorship and the audience's relation to the cinematic experience. He argues that in modern painting, and

he cites Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Begère* (1882) as a canonical example, and cinema, that there is a dialectical tension between absorption and theatricality – in which each are in a double bind.

5. Elizabeth Cowie's essay "Film Noir and Women" in Joan Copjec (ed.) (1993) *Shades of Noir: A Reader*, sets out to challenge the tendency to characterize *film noir* always as a masculine film form, and she discusses the common elements or inflection between *noir* and melodrama. Her conclusion is that the conjoining of desire and destruction in the 1940s *film noir* is equally present for women and men. However, her essay has a different emphasis to the one I follow in this chapter in which the masculine and feminine structures do not have to relate strictly to biological men and women, but rather, they present structurally different positions based around sexual difference.
6. Adrian Rifkin pointed out that this scene can also be read as an allegory of a coming out scene. And another gay friend who unfortunately died in 2003 loved this film while hating the rest of Lynch's work. For him *The Elephant Man* suggested a great deal about his own relationship with his father and stepmother who were supportive and loving when he came out. But he used to say to me, "How could a man who made such a beautiful film as *The Elephant Man* make those awful, disturbing ones. I saw *Blue Velvet* and I felt soiled. I'm disturbed that you want to study those films." He was only partially joking!
7. See Darke (1994) for a reading of *The Elephant Man* in which the film is read as a reactionary discourse about disability, which panders to cultural stereotypes.
8. See Žižek (2000) for a detailed discussion of the redemptive power of clichés in Lynch's work.
9. "La Llorona", "The Weeping Woman", is an old tale among Spanish-speaking people in North America about the river of life that became a river of death. Clarissa Pinkola Estés (1992, pp. 301-318) *Women Who Run With the Wolves: Contacting the Power of the Wild Woman*, refers to the ways in which the story has changed significantly over time as if it has an inner life of its own.
10. When *Mulholland Drive* was reviewed on BBC 2's Newsnight Late Review Jeanette Winterson praised the film for the way in which it presented the lesbian relationship. John Carey, on the other hand, was less impressed and did not feel that the characters were "drawn" in sufficient detail for him to care about them.
11. Chambers Dictionary (1998, p. 705) has the following entry: "**greet** *grēt*, (*Scot*; *Spencer greete*) *vi* to weep...*n* weeping; a spell of weeping." When I cry I often hear my German/Scottish Aunt's voice saying, not unkindly, "Stop your greetin'".

4. Driven to distraction: Cinema spectatorship along the Lynchian highway

1. The illustrations used as part of the subheadings in this chapter come from the California Driver Handbook, produced by the Department of Motor Vehicles. It is available online at <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/hdbk/driver_handbook_toc.htm> [Last accessed 15 October 2005].

2. Here I am thinking of the work of Sean Cubitt (2004), Laura Mulvey (2004) and Slavoj Žižek (2000), amongst others.
 3. I am grateful to Adrian Rifkin for bringing *Eloge de l'amour* to my attention, and for the discussions about the way in which the screen is mobilized by Godard.
 4. See Žižek (2000, pp.39-41) for his discussion of the *futur antérieur* in the history of art and Lynch's place within it.
 5. Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* of 1950 has been an important reference point for David Lynch, as well as being a crucial *noir* reference generally. Lynch gave a screening of the film prior to commencing shooting of *Eraserhead*, as a way of explaining the mood he wanted for his film.
 6. Fred Madison's anamorphically distorted head as his "reality" becomes so unbearable that he fantasises himself into Peter Drayton, is another example, like the Red Room in *Twin Peaks*, of the way in which Francis Bacon's paintings find their way into Lynch's films.
 7. Lynch describes these "eye-of-the-duck" scenes as important, although not strictly necessary, in moving the narrative on towards its conclusion. These scenes include Ben's mimed rendition of *In Dreams* in *Blue Velvet* and John Merrick's visit to the theatre in *The Elephant Man*.
5. Pierced by the Past: Filmic Trauma; Remembering and Forgetting.
1. Romney (2004, pp. 85-88) suggests a number of reasons for the incorporation of experimental structures into mainstream films. Firstly, he argues that audiences and filmmakers are now conversant with the discontinuous logic of music video, the graphic novel, Japanese *anime* and the Internet. Secondly, that the Western film industry has become increasingly prescriptive about story shape. His third reason lies in the technological crisis affecting the arts of knowledge and memory, in which, as digital image technologies replace analogue, that there is "a loss of confidence in the permanence of any kind of cinematic statement". This, he believes, may lead to the production of films which "will be designed to be simultaneously experienced and forgotten".
 2. The subtitle used here is a play on The Clash's song 'Safe European Home' (1978).
 3. For a different reading of *Lost Highway* see chapter 6, 'Cognitive theories of narration', in Thomas Elsaesser and Warren Buckland (2002). The cognitive approach used highlights the formal characteristics of the film and it is an approach which I have sought to refer to but to remain aloof from in this thesis, because it seems insufficient as a means of dealing with the complexities of Lynch's films. Elsaesser and Buckland quote David Bordwell's views that psychoanalytic approaches should only be used in film analysis if other approaches fail to explain the film. Underlying this approach are Noël Carroll's vehemently antagonistic views about psychoanalysis, to which I have referred in the introductory chapter. Elsaesser and Buckland also refer to Martha Nochimson's views about Lynch's work utilizing non-rational subconscious energies which are uncanny (2002, p.168). Implicit in these comments are references to psychoanalysis and Freud's

essay “The Uncanny” of 1919. It is my view that a psychoanalytic approach is needed to account for the complexities of this and other Lynch films, and that cognitive approaches which do not account for any unconscious aspects of the films’ texts and their affect upon the spectator will be inadequate for the job in hand. In addition, as Cubitt (2004, pp.4-5) points out, cognitive theorists such as David Bordwell seek “to establish as normative the practices of the North American film industry, and to derive all other filmic styles from that norm”, which is something I wish to avoid in my analyses of Lynch’s films and their relation to film history, theory and practice.

4. As a note to Slavoj Žižek’s (2000, p.49, note 23) essay makes plain, the phrase “Dick Laurent is dead” can be read as the assertion of castration, that the father is already dead/castrated and that the promise of fantasy is a lure – the message Fred only assumes at the end of the film.
5. The title of André Green’s book in the original French is *le temps éclaté*, which has been translated as “Shattered Time” in the English version (2002). This is the first part of his study of time, the second part being translated as *Diachrony in Psychoanalysis* (2003).
6. “Lost in darkness and confusion” is a phrase Lynch uses to refer to a central theme of his work, both film and fine art, as an attempt to grapple with these issues which he sees as central to life. For example, in Rodley (1997, pp. 20) he says “I don’t know why it’s necessary that we get lost in this darkness and confusion, but part of it is *really* enjoyable”, and that art is an important means by which these issues can be dealt with creatively.
7. “Now where was I?” is the line Leonard Shelby uses in *Memento* as he seeks to order his life, to constitute meaning for his actions.

6. “It Is Happening Again”: Experiencing the Lynchian Uncanny

1. Other contributing directors to the Lumière & Company centenary collection of films included: Spike Lee, Wim Wenders, Zhang Yimou, Liv Ullmann, Gosta Gravas and John Boorman.
2. Here, again, I am thinking of the work of Sean Cubitt (2004), Laura Mulvey (2004) and Slavoj Žižek (2000), amongst others.
3. This line, spoken by Mrs. Grose in the film, was written by John Mortimer.
4. Jack Clayton experimented with multiple dissolves in this film which he said produced “images which hang there...and have a meaning which applies both to the end of the last scene and the beginning of the next”. Clayton and his editor, Jim Clark, worked on a technical effect whereby the dissolves used burned out into white rather than faded to the usual black (for further details see Sinyard, 2000, p. 82, and 107, n. 3).
5. See Chapter Five, ‘Black and Blue’, in Brunette and Willis (1989, pp. 139-17) for a deconstructive analysis of *Blue Velvet*.

6. Slavoj Žižek (2000, p.44, and p.47, n.47) mentions how a rumour emerged that some viewers of *Eraserhead* experienced nausea due, they believed to a ultra-low, inaudible, frequency in the film's soundtrack that affected the viewer's subconscious mind. This leads Žižek to conclude that: "The status of this voice that no one can perceive, but which nonetheless dominates us and produces material effects (feelings of unease and nausea), is *real-impossible*: it is the voice which the subject cannot hear because it is uttered in the Other Site of the fundamental fantasy – and is not Lynch's entire work an endeavor [sic] to bring the spectator "to the point of hearing inaudible noises" and thus to confront the comic horror of the fundamental fantasy?"
7. See Žižek (1995) for a discussion of 'The Lamella of David Lynch', and in particular, page 206 for his comments on the opening shots of *Blue Velvet*. See also, Brunette and Wills (1989) for the deconstructive discussion as to how the bugs in this film disrupt a psychoanalytic reading.

7. Conclusion: "A Stitch in Time..."

1. Perversely, Žižek claims this to be his favourite Lynch film, and although it was generally a failure at the box office, it was well received in France. See Sheen (2004) for a discussion of the relationship between the film and New Hollywood.
2. For more general details and discussion of the Lacanian *object (petit) a* see Evans (1996, pp. 124-126) and Fink (1995).
3. See Buci-Glucksmann (1994: 101, and 105, n. 15) in which she points out that "Lacan's reference to the stone phallus comes from 'La Relation d'objet', unpublished seminar of 5 December 1956, quoted in Monique David-Ménard, *L'Hystérique entre Freud et Lacan*, Paris: Éditions universitaires 1983, p.203".
4. See William Paul (1997, pp. 321-347) for a discussion about the uncanny nature of (early) film and the failed attempts to "tame" it in the new exhibition theatres.

Bibliography

- Adams, P. ed. (2003) *Art: Sublimation or Symptom*. London, Karnac.
- Alexander, J. (1993) *The Films of David Lynch*. London, Letts.
- Alexander, V. (1994) David Lynch. *The Perfect Vision*, 6 (23) October, pp.114-119.
- Allen, R. and Smith, M. eds. (1997) *Film Theory and Philosophy*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- Andrew, G. (1998) *Stranger than Paradise: Maverick film-makers in recent American Cinema*. London, Prion.
- Andrews, D. (2004) An Oneiric Fugue: The Various Logics of *Mulholland Drive*. *Journal of Film and Video*. 56 (1) Spring, 25-40.
- Arnold, D. and Iverson, M. eds. (2003) *Art and Thought*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing.
- Artfacts (2005) [Internet]. Available from:
<<http://www.artfacts.net/index.php/pageType/exhibitionInfo/exhibition/12717>> [Accessed 25 October 2005].
- Artnet (2005) [Online image]. Available from:
< <http://www.artnet.com/artwork/47406/cathy-de-monchaux-dont-touch-my-waist-detail.html>>, [Accessed 24 October 2005].
- Atkinson, M. (1997) *Blue Velvet*. London, BFI Publishing.
- Atkinson, M. (1999) Notes on Two Detours. In: *Ghosts in the Machine: Speculating On the Dark Heart of Pop Cinema*. New York, Limelight Editions, pp.49-56.
- Augustine, St. (1992) *Confessions*. Translated by Henry Chadwick. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Ayers, S. (2004) *Twin Peaks*, Weak Language and the Resurrection of Affect. In Sheen, E. and Davison, A. eds. *The cinema of David Lynch: american dreams, nightmare visions*. London and New York, Wallflower Press, 93-106.
- Bal, M. (2001) *Louise Bourgeois' "Spider"*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Banham, R. (1971) *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*. London, Penguin.
- Barnard, S. and Fink, B. eds. (2002) *Reading Seminar XX: Lacan's Major Work on Love, Knowledge, and Feminine Sexuality*. Albany, State University of New York Press.
- Barthes, R. (1975) *The Pleasure of the Text*. Translated by Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Barthes, R. (1977) *Image Music Text*. Translated from the French by S. Heath. London, Fontana Press.
- Barthes, R. (1993a) *Camera Lucida*. Translated by Richard Howard. London, Vintage.

- Barthes, R. (1993b) *Mythologies*. Translated from the French by A. Lavers. London, Vintage.
- Barthes, R. (2002) *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*. Translated from the French by Richard Howard. London, Vintage Classics.
- Baudrillard, J. (1988) *America*. Translated from the French by Chris Turner. London and New York, Verso.
- Baudrillard, J. (1993) *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena*. Translated from the French by J. Benedict. London, Verso.
- Benezra, N. and Brougher, K. (2000) *Ed Ruscha*. Washington and Oxford, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden and the Museum of Modern Art
- Bell, M. (2000) *Sentimentalism, Ethics and the Culture of Feeling*. Basingstoke, Palgrave.
- Benjamin, A. and Osborne, P. eds. (2000) *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy: Destruction and Experience*. Manchester, Clinamen Press
- Benjamin, W. (1979) *One-Way Street and Other Writings*. Translated by J. Edmund and S. Kingsley. London and New York, Verso.
- Benjamin, W. (1999) *Illuminations*. London, Translated by H. Korn. London, Pimlico.
- Benjamin, W. (2003) *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. Translated by J. Osborne. London and New York, Verso.
- Bergen Filmklub (2005) [Online image]. Available from: <<http://www.bergen-filmklubb.no/images/Elefantmannen.jpg>> [Accessed 24 October 2005].
- Bergstrom, J. ed. (1999) *Endless Night: Cinema and Psychoanalysis, Parallel Histories*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press.
- Berry, B. (1998) Forever, In My Dreams: Generic Conventions and The Subversive Imagination in *Blue Velvet*. *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 16 (2), pp.82-90.
- Biga, T. (1987) Blue Velvet. *Film Quarterly*, 41 (1) Autumn, pp.44-49.
- Biodrowski, S. (1997) Lost Highway. *Cinefantastique*. 28 (9) March, pp.48 – 49.
- Blake, W. (circa 1790-93) The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. In Keynes, G. ed. *Blake Complete Writings*. London, Oxford University Press.
- Blassmann, A. (1999) The Detective in "Twin Peaks". [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2093/papers.html> [Accessed 18 January 2004]
- Blue Velvet*. (2000 [1986]) Directed by David Lynch. Castle Home Video [video:DVD].
- Bois, Y., A. and Krauss, R. eds. (1997) *Formless: A User's Guide*. New York, Zone Books.

- Bordwell, D. and Carroll, N. eds. (1996) *Post-Theory: Reconstituting Film Studies*. Wisconsin, The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Botting, F. and Wilson, S. (2001) *Bataille*. Basingstoke, Palgrave.
- Bouveresse, J. (1995) *Wittgenstein Reads Freud: The Myth of the Unconscious*. Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press.
- Bouzereau, L. (1987) Blue Velvet: An Interview with David Lynch. *Cineaste*, 15 (3), p.39.
- Bowie, M. (1991) *Lacan*. London, Fontana Press.
- Bracewell, M. and Gillick, L. (2004) Debate: Sentimentality. *Frieze* 86 October, pp.124-125.
- Brennan, T. (1993) *History After Lacan*. London and New York, Routledge.
- Bronfen, E. (1992) *Over Her Dead Body: Death, femininity and the aesthetic*. Manchester, Manchester University Press.
- Brooks, P. (1976) *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess*. New Haven and London, Yale University Press.
- Brottman, M. and Sharrett, C. (1999) End of the Road: Cronenberg's "Crash" and the Fading of the West. In: Sargeant, J. and Watson, S. eds. *Lost Highways: An Illustrated History of Road Movies*. Creation Books, pp.276 – 286.
- Bryan, G. (1999) Nowhere to Run: Pulp Noir of the Road. In: Sargeant, J. and Watson, S. eds. *Lost Highways: An Illustrated History of Road Movies*. Creation Books, pp.44 – 53.
- Bryson, N. ed. (1988) *Calligram: Essays in New Art History from France*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Bryson, N. Holly, M. A. and Moxey, K. eds. (1991) *Visual Theory: Painting and Interpretation*. Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Buci-Glucksmann, C. (1994) *Baroque Reason: The Aesthetics of Modernity*. Translated by P. Camiller. London, Sage Publications.
- Burke, S. (1998) *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.
- Buckland, W. (2003a) "A Sad, Bad, Traffic Accident": The Televisual Prehistory of David Lynch's Film *Mulholland Drive*. *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, 1 (1) November, pp.131-147.
- Buckland, W. (2003b) *Teach Yourself Film Studies*. 2nd ed. London, Hodder Headline.
- Buscombe, E. (1981) Ideas of Authorship. In: Screen. *Screen Reader 2: Cinema and Semiotics*. London, The Society for Education in Film and Television.

- Butt, G. ed. (2005) *After Criticism: New Responses to Art and Performance*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing.
- Caldwell, T. (1999) Lost in Darkness and Confusion: *Lost Highway*, Lacan, and *film noir*. *Metro*, 118, pp.46 – 50.
- Capp R. (1999) Black Noise: *Lost Highway* and the Lexicon of Neo-Noir. *Metro*, 118: pp. 52 – 56.
- Carroll, N. (1988) *Mystifying Movies: Fads and Fallacies in Contemporary Film Theory*. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Caygill, H. (1998) *Walter Benjamin: The Colour of Experience*. London and New York, Routledge.
- Caygill, H. (2000) Benjamin, Heidegger and the Destruction of Tradition. In: Benjamin, A. and Osborne, P. *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy: Destruction and Experience*. Manchester, Clinamen Press.
- Celeste, R. (1997) *Lost Highway*: Unveiling Cinema's Yellow Brick Road. *Cineaction*, 43 July, pp.32 –39.
- The Chambers Dictionary*. (1998) Edinburgh, Chambers.
- Chion, M. (1994) *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*. Translated by C. Gorbman. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Chion, M. (1995) *David Lynch*. London, BFI Publishing.
- Chisolm, B. (1991) Difficult Viewing: The Pleasures of Complex Screen Narratives. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, v. 8, n. 4, December, pp.389 403.
- Christov-Bakargiev (2003) *Janet Cardiff: A Survey of Works Including Collaborations with George Bures Miller*. Second Edition. New York, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center.
- Chute, David (1986) Out to Lynch. *Film Comment*, v.22, n.5, September/October, pp.32-35.
- The Cinematic Sublime in the Work of David Lynch. (2004) Conference held at the University of Warwick, Centre for Research in Philosophy and Literature, 11th February 2004.
- Combs, R. (1987) Blue Velvet. *Monthly Film Bulletin*, v.54, n.639, April, pp.99-104.
- Combs, R. (1990) Wild at Heart. *Monthly Film Bulletin*, v. 57, n.680, September, pp.271 – 273.
- Conomos, J. (1996) Colouring in David Lynch's Cinema. *Metro*, No.105, pp.51-55.
- Copjec, J. ed (1993) *Shades of Noir*. London and New York: Verso.
- Copjec, J. (1994a) The Cogito, The Unconscious and The Invention of Crying. *New Formations*, No. 23, Summer, pp.1-12.
- Copjec, J. (1994b) *Read My Desire: Lacan against the Historicists*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, The MIT Press.

- Copjec, J. ed. (1996) *Radical Evil*. London and New York, Verso.
- Copjec, J. (1999) More! From Melodrama to Magnitude. In Bergstrom, J. ed *Endless Night: Cinema and Psychoanalysis, Parallel Histories*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press.
- Copjec, J. (2004) *Imagine There's No Woman: Ethics and Sublimation*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, The MIT Press.
- Corliss, R. (1986) Our Town: George Bailey Meets "True", "Blue" and "Peggy Sue". *Film Comment*, Vol.22, No.6, November/December, pp.16-17.
- Cosmopolis (2005) [Online image] Available from:< www.cosmopolis.ch/.../mulholland_drive.htm>[Accessed 25 October 2005].
- Crash*. (1999 [1996]) Directed by David Cronenberg. London, Columbia Tristar Home Video [video:DVD].
- Creed, B. (1988) A Journey Through *Blue Velvet*: Film, Fantasy and the Female Spectator. *New Formations*, n.6, Winter, pp.97-118.
- Cowie, E. (1993a) *From Fantasia*. In Easthope, A. (ed.) *Contemporary Film Theory*. London and New York, Longman.
- Cowie, E. (1993b) *Film Noir and Women*. In Copjec, J. (ed.) *Shades of Noir*. London and New York: Verso.
- Cowie, E. (1997) *Representing the Woman: Cinema and Psychoanalysis*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cowie, E. (2000) Traumatic Memories of Remembering and Forgetting. In: Rossington, M. and Whitehead, A. eds. *Between the Psyche and the Polis: Refiguring history in literature and theory*, Hampshire, Ashgate Publishing Limited, pp.191-204.
- Cubitt, S. (2004) *The Cinema Effect*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, The MIT Press.
- Daniel, A. (1999) Get Your Kicks: "Easy Rider" and the Counter-Culture. In: Sargeant, J. and Watson, S. eds. *Lost Highways: An Illustrated History of Road Movies*. Creation Books, pp.68 – 80.
- Dargis, M. (1991) Roads to Freedom. *Sight and Sound*, July, pp.15 – 18.
- Dargis, M. (1995) Methods and Madness. *Sight and Sound*, June, pp.6 – 8.
- Darke, P. A. (1994) *The Elephant Man* (David Lynch, EMI Films, 1989): an analysis from a disabled perspective. *Disability & Society*, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp.327-342.
- Davis, M. (1990) *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*. London and New York, Verso.
- Deleuze, G. (1988) *Foucault*. Translated by S. Hand. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

- Detour*. (1955) Directed by Edgar G. Ulmer. USA, Producers Publishing Corporation [video:VHS].
- Dolar, Mladen (1991) "I Shall Be with You on Your Wedding-Night": Lacan and the Uncanny. *October*. 58. Fall, pp.5 – 23.
- Dolar, M. (1996) The Object Voice. In Salecl, R. and Žižek, S. eds. (1996) *Gaze and Voice as Love Objects*. Durham and London, Duke University Press.
- Douglas, M. (2002 [1966]) *Purity and Danger*. London and New York, Routledge.
- Drazin, C. (1998) *Blue Velvet*. London, Bloomsbury.
- Dufresne, T. (2005) *Killing Freud: Twentieth Century Culture and the Death of Psychoanalysis*. London and New York, Continuum.
- Dundas, A. (2005) [Internet]. *The Official Twin Peaks Site*. Available from :<
<http://www.cenedra.com/twinpeaksmain.htm>> [Accessed 16 July 2005].
- Dune*. (1995 [1984]) Directed by David Lynch. PolyGram Video Limited [video: VHS].
- Dunne, M. (1995) *Wild at Heart* Three Ways: Lynch, Gifford, Bakhtin. *Literature/Film Quarterly*, v. 23, pp.6 – 13.
- Duras, M. (1961) *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, screenplay. Translated by R. Seaver. New York, Grove Press.
- Easy Rider*. (1999 [1969]) Directed by Dennis Hopper. London, Columbia [video:DVD].
- Eco, U. (1984) *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
- Eco, U. (1986) *Travels in Hyperreality* Translated by William Weaver. San Diego, New York, London, Harcourt Brace.
- Elephant Man, The*. (2001 [1980]) Directed by David Lynch. Momentum Pictures [video:DVD].
- Elkins, J. (2004) *Pictures & Tears: A History of People Who Have Cried in Front of Paintings*. New York and London, Routledge.
- Eloge de L'Amour (In Praise of Love)*. (2002 [2001]). Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Optimum Releasing [video:DVD].
- Elsaesser, T. and Buckland, W. (2002) *Studying Contemporary Film: A Guide to Movie Analysis*. London, Hodder Headline Group.
- Engh, B. (1999) After "His Master's Voice". In *Hating Tradition Properly, New Formations*. Number 38, Summer, pp.54 – 63.
- Eraserhead*. (2001 [1976]) Directed by David Lynch. Universal Pictures (UK) Ltd [video: DVD].

- Escobar's Twin Peaks (2003) [Online images]. Available from:
 <<http://www.ee.oulu.fi/~escobar/twinpeaks/pic/MD/md-2-026.jpg>> [Accessed 24 October 2005].
- Evans, D. (1996) *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*. London and New York, Routledge.
- Evans, M. (2002) On David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977). *Daily Telegraph*, 5 October.
- Fédida, P. (2003) The relic and the work of mourning. *journal of visual culture*. Vol, 2, No. 1, April, pp.62-68.
- Feldstein, R. Fink, B. Jaanus, M. eds. (1995) *Reading Seminar XI: Lacan's Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Albany, State University of New York Press.
- Feldstein, R. Fink, B. Jaanus, M. eds. (1996) *Reading Seminars I and II: Lacan's Return to Freud*. Albany, State University of New York Press.
- Film Fashion (2005) [Online image]. Available from:
 <<http://www.filmfashion.nl/stills/140.html>> [Accessed 15 October 2005].
- Fink, B. (1995) *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance*. Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press.
- Fink, B. (1999) *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Theory and Technique*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, Harvard University Press.
- Flinn, C. (1992) *Strains of Utopia: Gender, Nostalgia, and Hollywood Film Music*. Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press.
- Foster, H. (1995) *Compulsive Beauty*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, The MIT Press.
- Foucault, M. (2002) *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith. London and New York, Routledge Classics.
- French, S. (1987) The Heart of the Cavern [Internet]. *Sight and Sound*, Spring. Available from:
 <<http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2093/papers/french.html>> [Accessed 18 January 2004].
- Freud, S. (1990) *Volume 14. Art and Literature*. London: Penguin Books.
- Freud, S. (2001) *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Volume 1 (1886-1899). Pre-Psycho-Analytic Publications and Unpublished Drafts*. Translated by James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud. London, Vintage.
- Friedberg, A. (1993) *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press.
- Frisby, D. (1985) *Fragments of Modernity: Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Krakauer and Benjamin*. Cambridge and Oxford, Polity Press in association with Basil Blackwell.

- Frisby, D. (2002) *Georg Simmel*. Revised edition. London and New York, Routledge.
- Fuller, G. (1990) Call of the Wild. *Listener*, v. 123, n.3164, 10 May, pp.28 – 31.
- Fuller, G. (2001) Babes in Babylon. *Sight and Sound*, Vol. 11, (12), pp.14 – 17.
- Gainsborough, J. (1999) Straight Shooting. *American Cinematographer*, Vol.80, No. 11, November, pp.16-22.
- Gandini, L. (1994) Noir in color. *Fotogenia*, No, 1, pp.302-306.
- Geller, T. (1992) Deconstructing Postmodern Television in *Twin Peaks*. *Spectator*, v.12, n.2, Spring, pp.64 -71.
- George, D. H. (1995) Lynching Women: A Feminist Reading of *Twin Peaks*. In: Lavery, D. ed. (1995) *Full of Secrets: Critical Approaches to "Twin Peaks"*. Detroit, Wayne State University Press.
- Gifford, B. (1998) *The Wild Life of Sailor and Lula*. Edinburgh, Rebel Inc.
- Godwin, K. G. (1984) *Eraserhead*: The story behind the strangest film ever made, and the cinematic Genius who directed it. *Cinefantastique*, Vol.14, No. 4 and Vol.15, No. 5, Special Double-Issue, September, pp.41-72.
- Godwin, K. G. (1985) *Eraserhead*. *Film Quarterly*, Vol.39, No.1, Autumn, pp.37-43.
- Goodwin, A. (1990) Weird and Not So Wonderful. *Listener*, v. 123, n.3164, 10 May, pp.28 – 30.
- Google (2005) [Online images] Available from:
<http://images.google.co.uk/images?q=un+chien+andalou&svnum=10&hl=en&lr=&start=140&sa=N> [Accessed 14 October 2005].
- Grant, E. (1991) Wild at Heart. *Films in Review*, January/February, pp.49 – 51.
- Green, A. (2002) *Time in Psychoanalysis: Some Contradictory Aspects*. Translated by Andrew Weller. London and New York, Free Association Books.
- Green, A. (2003) *Diachrony in Psychoanalysis*. Translated by Andrew Weller. London and New York, Free Association Books.
- Greuze, J-B (1765) *A Girl with a Dead Canary*. National Galleries of Scotland.[Internet] Available from:<http://www.nationalgalleries.org/collections/artist_search.php?artistId=4971&initial=G&artistName=Jean-Baptiste%20Greuze> [Accessed 24 October 2005].
- Greylodge (2005) [Online image] Available from:< [www.mindgap.org/ img/andalou.jpg](http://www.mindgap.org/img/andalou.jpg)>[Accessed 24 October 2005].
- Grosz, E. (1990) *Jacques Lacan: A feminist introduction*. London and New York, Routledge.

- Gunning, T. (1995) Phantom Images and Modern Manifestations: Spirit Photography, Magic Theater, Trick Films, and Photography's Uncanny. In: Petro, P. ed. *Fugitive Images: From Photography to Video*. Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, pp.42-71.
- Harari, J. V. (ed.) (1980) *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*. London, Methuen and Co. Ltd.
- Harari, R. (2001) *Lacan's Seminar on "Anxiety": An Introduction*. New York, Other Press.
- Hartmann, M. (2004) [Internet] The City of Absurdity: The mysterious world of David Lynch, website at: <http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2093> [Last accessed: 25 October 2005].
- Haywood, S. and Vincendeau, G. eds. (1990) *French Film: Texts and Contexts*. London and New York, Routledge.
- Heath, S. (1977/78) 'Notes on Suture', *Screen*, Winter, v.18, n.4, pp.48-76.
- Herbert, F. (1984) *Dune*. London, Victor Gollancz Ltd.
- Henri, R. (1984 [1923]) *The Art Spirit*. Boulder, Colorado and Oxford, UK, Westview Press.
- Hertz, N. (1980) Freud and the Sandman. In Harari, J. V. (ed.) *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*. London, Methuen and Co. Ltd.
- Herzogenrath, B. (1999) On the *Lost Highway*: Lynch and Lacan, Cinema and Cultural Pathology [online]. *Other Voices*, v.1, n.3 (January). Last accessed on 18 January 2004 at URL <http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2003/papers/herzogenrath.html> to be completed
- Hiroshima Mon Amour*. (1959). Directed by Alain Resnais. France/Japan [video:VHS].
- Hoffmann, E.T.A., (1982) *Tales of Hoffmann*. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. London, Penguin Classics.
- Hotel Room*. (1992) *Tricks* and *Blackout* directed by David Lynch. HBO [video:VHS, off air].
- Howard, J. (2001) What Is Sentimentality? In *Publishing the Family*. Durham and London, Duke University Press, pp.213-256.
- Howell, M. and Ford, P. (1992) *The True History of the Elephant Man*. Third edition. London, Allison & Bushby Limited.
- Hudson, J. A. (2004) "No Hay Banda, and yet We Hear a Band": David Lynch's Reversal of Coherence in *Mulholland Drive*. *Journal of Film and Video*. 56.1 / Spring, pp.17-24.
- Hughes, D. (2001) *The Complete Lynch*. London, Virgin.
- Industrial Symphony No. 1*. (1999 [1989]) Directed by David Lynch. Warner Bros. [video:VHS].
- Innocents, The*. (1961). Directed by Jack Clayton. Off air [video:VHS].

- Instrell, R. (1991) Postmodern Television: *Twin Peaks*. An investigation into the form and meaning of The cult TV serial. University of Edinburgh Continuing Education Department, 2 November and 20 November, 1991.
- Irigaray, L. (1991) *The Irigaray Reader*. Edited by Margaret Whitford. Oxford, UK and Massachusetts: Blackwell.
- Iveson, M. (1994) What is a photograph? *Art History*. Vol. 17. No. 3, pp.450 -464.
- Jaehne, K. (1997) Blue Velvet. *Cineaste*, v.15, n.3, pp.38-41.
- Jackson, K. (1992) Gothic Shadows: Interview with Freddie Francis. *Sight and Sound*, November, pp.16-19.
- Jackson, K. (1999) The Straight Story. *Sight and Sound*, Vol. 9, No. 12, December, pp.57 – 58.
- Jameson, F. (1991) *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. London and New York, Verso. Jameson, F. (1993) The Synoptic Chandler. In Copjec, J. ed. *Shades of Noir: A Reader*. London and New York, Verso.
- Jameson, F. (2002) *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a socially symbolic act*. London and New York, Penguin Classics.
- Jenkins, H. (1995) “Do You Enjoy Making the Rest of Us Feel Stupid?”: alt.tv.twinpeaks, the Trickster Author, and Viewer Mastery. In: Lavery, D. ed. *Full of Secrets: Critical Approaches to ‘Twin Peaks’*. Detroit, Wayne State University Press, pp.51 – 69.
- Kaleta, K. C. (1993) *David Lynch*. New York, Twayne Publishers.
- Kay, S. (2003) *Žižek: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge and Oxford, Polity Press in association with Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Keller, J. R. (1995) “Like to a Chaos”: Deformity and Depravity in Contemporary Film. *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, Vol.23, No. 1, Spring, pp.8-14.
- Kerr, J. (2002) Thematic Introductions. In Wollen, P. and Kerr, J. eds. (2002) *Autopia: Cars and Culture*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Klinger, Barbara (1997) The Road to Dystopia: Landscaping the nation in *Easy Rider*. In Cohan, S. and Hark, I. R. eds. *The Road Movie Book*. London and New York, Routledge. **Check date**
- Koch, G. (2000) Cosmos in Film: On the Concept of Space in Walter Benjamin’s “Work of Art” Essay. Translated by N. Nenno. In Benjamin, A. and Osborne, P. *Walter Benjamin’s Philosophy: Destruction and Experience*. Manchester, Clinamen Press.
- Kim, S-Y. (2002) *The Lacanian Subject and the Benjaminian Dialectical Image: The Death Drive, Desire and Memory*. PhD thesis, University of Sheffield.
- Kofman, S. (1991) *Freud and Fiction*. Oxford and Cambridge, Polity Press in Association with Basil Blackwell.

- Kofman, S. (1988) *The Childhood of Art: An Interpretation of Freud's Aesthetics*. Translated by W. Woodhull. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Kornbluh, A. (2004) Romancing the Capital: Choice, Love, and Contradiction in *The Family Man* and *Memento*. In McGowan, T. and Kunkle, S. eds. *Lacan and Contemporary Film*. New York, Other Press.
- Kristeva, J. (1984) *Revolution in Poetic Language*. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Kristeva, J. (1988) Giotto's Joy. In Bryson, N. ed. *Calligram: Essays in New Art History from France*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Kristeva, J. (1989) *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*. Translated by L. S. Roudiez. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Kristeva, J. (1991) *Strangers to Ourselves*. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Lacan, J. (1977) *Écrits: A Selection*. Translated by A. Sheridan. London, Routledge.
- Lacan, J. (1979) *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*. London, Penguin.
- Lacan, J. (1988) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book I: Freud's Papers on Technique, 1953-1954*. New York and London, W.W. Norton & Company.
- Lacan, J. (1990) *Television: A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment*, Copjec, J. ed., Translated by D. Hollier, R. Krauss, A. Michelson. New York, Norton.
- Lacan, J. (1991) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954-1955*. Edited by J-A. Miller and translated by S. Tomaselli. New York and London, W.W. Norton & Company.
- Lacan, J. (1992) *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-1960. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII*. Edited by J-A. Miller. Translated by Dennis Porter. London and New York, Routledge.
- Lacan, J. (1999) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan.: On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge, Book XX 1972-1973*. Edited by J-A. Miller. Translated by B. Fink. New York and London, W.W. Norton & Company.
- Laderman, D. (2002) *Driving Visions: Exploring the Road Movie*. Austin, University of Texas Press.
- Lafky, S. (1999-2000) Gender, Power, and Culture in the Televisual World of *Twin Peaks*: A Feminist Critique. *Journal of Film and Video*, 51.3-4, Fall-Winter, pp.5-19.
- Lafrance, J. D. (1996) In Heaven. [Internet]. Available from:
<<http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2093/papers/jdl.html>> [Accessed 18 January 2004]
- Laplanche, J. and Pontalis, J.-B. (1973) *The Language of Psychoanalysis*. Translated by D. Nicholson-Smith. London, Karnac Books.
- Lavery, D. ed. (1993) Peaked Out! *Twin Peaks* Special Issue. *Literature/Film Quarterly*, v. 21, no. 4, pp.239 – 304.

- Lavery, D. ed. (1995) *Full of Secrets: Critical Approaches to "Twin Peaks"*. Detroit, Wayne State University Press.
- Layton, L. (1994) *Blue Velvet*: a parable of male development. *Screen* 35:4, Winter, pp.374-393.
- Le Blanc, M. and Odell C. (2000) *David Lynch*. Harpenden, Pocket Essentials.
- Lebeau, V. (2001) *Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Play of Shadows*. London and New York, Wallflower Press.
- Leader, D. (2003) Some Thoughts on Mourning and Melancholia. *Journal for Lacanian Studies*. 1(1), pp.4-37.
- Levin, T. (1984) The Acoustic Dimension: Notes on Cinema Sound. *Screen*, Vol. 25, No. 3, May-June, pp.55-68.
- Levine, M. (2002) Pantheism. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.). [Internet]. Available from: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2002/entries/pantheism> [Accessed on 7 March 2004]
- Levy, E. (1999) The Straight Story. *Variety*, May 24 – 30, pp.73 -74.
- Lichtenberg Ettinger, B. (1995) *The Matrixial Gaze*. Leeds, Feminist Arts and Histories Network.
- Ligot, L. (2001) About *The Third Place* – A concentration of Lynchian themes [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2093/papers/ligot.html> [Accessed on 18 January 2004].
- Lindroth, J.(1990) Down the Yellow Brick Road: Two Dorothys and the Journey of Initiation in Dream and Nightmare. *Literature/Film Quarterly*, v.18, n.3, pp.160-166.
- Link, S. (2004) Sympathy with the devil? Music of the psycho post-*Psycho*. *Screen* 45:1, Spring, pp.1 – 20.
- Lopate, P. (2001) Welcome to L. A. *Film Comment*, September/October, 44-50 and 51-54.
- Lost Highway* (2002 [1997]) Directed by David Lynch. Universal Pictures (UK) Ltd. [video: DVD].
- Lumière & Company*. (1995) Various directors. Fox Lorber Home Video [video:VHS].
- Love, H. K. (2004) Spectacular Failure: The Figure of the Lesbian in *Mulholland Drive*. *New Literary History*, Volume 35, Winter, Number 1, pp.117-132.
- Lucas, Tim (1998) Kiss Me Doubly: Notes on David Lynch's *Lost Highway*. *Video Watchdog*, n.43, pp.27-35.
- Lupton, C. (2003) Terminal Replay: Resnais revisited in Chris Marker's *Level Five*. *Screen* 44:1, Spring, pp.58-70.
- Lukács, G. (1978) *Writer and Critic*. Translated by A. Kahn. London, Merlin Press.

- Lutz, T. (2001) *Crying: The Natural and Cultural History of Tears*. New York and London, W.W. Norton & Company.
- Lynch, D. (1985) *Blue Velvet*. Screenplay, Revised Third Draft, July 24. New York, Dino De Laurentiis Corporation.
- Lynch, D. (1994) *Images*. München, Paris, London, Schirmer-Mosel.
- Lynch, D. and Gifford, B. (1997) *Lost Highway*. London, Faber and Faber Limited.
- Lynch, D. (2005) *David Lynch.com*. [Internet]. Available from: < <http://www.davidlynch.com> > [Accessed 16 July 2005].
- Lynch Link, The. (2005)[Internet]. Available from: <<http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Lot/8994/Lynchmain.htm>> [Accessed 16 July 2005].
- Lynch, J. (1990) *The Secret Dairy of Laura Palmer*. London, Penguin Books.
- David Lynch Resource, A. (2005) [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.dugpa.com> [Accessed 16 July 2005].
- Lyons, D. (1994) *Independent Visions: A Critical Introduction to Recent Independent American Film*. New York, Ballantine.
- Lyons, D. (1997) La – La Limbo. *Film Comment*, v.33, n.1, January/February, pp.2 – 4.
- McFarlane, B. (1981) The Elephant Man. *Cinema Papers*, n.32, May/June, pp.179-181.
- McGowan, T. and Kunkle, S. (2004) *Lacan and Contemporary Film*. New York, Other Press.
- McGowan, T. (2000) Finding Ourselves of a *Lost Highway*: David Lynch's Lesson in Fantasy. *Cinema Journal*, 39, n.2, Winter, pp.51 – 73.
- McGowan, T. (2003) Looking for the Gaze: Lacanian Film Theory and Its Vicissitudes. *Cinema Journal* 42, No. 3, Spring, pp.27- 47.
- McGowan, T. (2004) Lost on Mulholland Drive: Navigating David Lynch's Panegyric to Hollywood. *Cinema Journal* 43, No. 2, Winter, pp.67 – 89.
- McGowan, T. and Kunkle, S. eds. (2004) *Lacan and Contemporary Film*. New York, Other Press.
- Magrid, R. (1986) *Blue Velvet* – Small Town Horror Tale. *American Cinematographer*, November, pp.60-74.
- McKinney, D. (1991/92) 'Wild at Heart'. *Film Quarterly*, v. 45, n.2, Winter, pp.41 – 46.
- Malcolm, D. and Christie, I. (1990) Cannes 43. *Sight and Sound*, Summer, pp.198 – 199.
- Marling, K. A. (2002) America's Love Affair with the Automobile in the Television Age. In Wollen, P. and Kerr, J. eds. *Autopia: Cars and Culture*. London, Reaktion Books.

- Man Ray, (1930 -1933) *Tears*. Gelatin silver print. [Internet] Getty Museum. Available from: < <http://www.getty.edu/art/collections/objects/oz44253.html>> [Accessed 24 October 2005]
- Maxfield, J. F. (1989) "Now it's Dark": The Child's Dream in David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*. *Postscript*, v.8, n. 3, Summer, pp.2-17.
- Memento*. (2002 [2000]) Directed by Christopher Nolan. Twentieth Century Fox [video:DVD].
- Metz, C. (1982) *Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier*. Translated by C. Britton, A. Williams, B. Brewster, A. Guzzetti. London and Basingstoke, Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Miller, J-A. (1977/78) Suture (elements of the logic of the signifier), *Screen*, Winter, v.18, n. 4, pp.24 – 34.
- Mitchell, J. and Rose, J. (1985) *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne*. New York and London, W.W. Norton & Company and Pantheon Books.
- Mitchell, J. (2000) *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*. London: Penguin Books.
- Mitchell, S. (1999) How Secrets Travel: David Lynch and the Road. In: Sargeant, J. and Watson, S. eds. (1999) *Lost Highways: An Illustrated History of Road Movies*: Creation Books, pp.242 - 256.
- Moviebox (2005) [Online image]. Available from: < <http://www.moviebox.se/recensioner/reclas1.asp?recID=417>>, [Accessed 24 October 2005].
- Mulholland Drive*. (2002 [2001]) Directed by David Lynch. Les Films Alain Sarde, Universal Pictures (UK) Ltd [video:DVD].
- Muller, J. P. and Richardson, W. J. eds. (1988) *The Purloined Poe: Lacan, Derrida, and Psychoanalytic Reading*. Baltimore and London, The John Hopkins University Press.
- Mulvey, L. (1989) *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Basingstoke and London, Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Mulvey, L. (1996) *Fetishism and Curiosity*. Bloomington and Indianapolis/London, Indiana University Press/BFI Publishing.
- Mulvey, L. (2000) The index and the uncanny. In Gill, C. B. ed. *Time and the Image*. Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press.
- Mulvey, L. (2000) Vesuvian Topographies: The Eruption of the Past in *Journey to Italy*. In Forgacs, D., Lutton, S. and Nowell-Smith, G eds. *Roberto Rossellini: Magician of the Real*. London, BFI.
- Mulvey, L. (2004) Passing time: reflections on cinema from a new technological age. *Screen*, 45: 2, Summer, 142 – 155.
- Murphy, K. (1990) Dead Heat on a Merry-Go-Round. *Film Comment*, v.26, n.6, November-December, 59 – 62.

- Murphy, S. (1996a) Building the Perfect *Dune*, Part 1. *Video Watchdog*, n33, pp.40-53.
- Murphy, S. (1996b) Building the Perfect *Dune*, Part 2. *Video Watchdog*, n34, pp.42-55.
- Murray, J. H. (1997) *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, The MIT Press.
- Mysterious and Disturbing Films of David Lynch [The]*[Internet]. Available from: <http://www.netmediapro.com/maninblack/DavidLynch/index.html> [Accessed 09 December 1998].
- Natoli, J. (2002) David Lynch. In Bertens, H. and Natoli, J. eds. *Postmodernism: The Key Figures*. Malden, Massachusetts and Oxford, Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Neale, S. (1986) Melodrama and Tears. *Screen*, vol.27/No. 6/November-December, 6-22.
- Newman, K. (1992) Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me. *Sight and Sound*, n. 7, November, pp.53 – 54.
- Newman, K. (1997) Lost Highway. *Sight and Sound*, v.7, n.9, September, pp.48 – 49.
- Newman, K. (2002) Mulholland Drive. *Sight and Sound* Vol. 12, no. 1, pp.50-51.
- Nixon, M. (Chair) (2003) Conversation between J. Mitchell and M. Kelly, *Theory as an Object conference*, Courtauld Institute of Art, 29 November.
- Nochimson, Martha (1992/93) Desire Under the Douglas Firs: Entering the Body of Reality in “Twin Peaks.” *Film Quarterly*, v. 42, n.2, Winter, pp.22-34.
- Nochimson, M. P. (1997) *The Passion of David Lynch*. Austin, University of Texas Press.
- O’Connell, S. (1995) Detective Deleuze and the Case of Slippery Signs [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/visarts/globe/teaks.html> [Accessed on 9 December 1998].
- O’Day, M. (2002) David Lynch. In: Tasker, Y. *Fifty Contemporary Filmmakers*. London and New York, Routledge.
- O’Mahony, J. (2002) The Guardian Profile – David Lynch. *The Guardian*, Saturday 12, pp6-7.
- Onega, S. and Landa, J. Ángel G. eds. (1996) *Narratology*. London and New York, Longman.
- Orgeron, D. (2002) Revising the Postmodern American Road Movie: David Lynch’s *The Straight Story*. *Journal of Film and Video*. 54.4, Winter, pp.31-46.
- Oudart, J-P. (1977/78) Cinema and Suture, *Screen*, Winter, v.18, n.4, pp.35 – 47.
- Orr, J. (1993) *Cinema and Modernity*. Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Paiva, R. (1997) The Lynch Film [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2093/papers/paiva01.html> [Accessed 18 January 2004].

- Palmer, K. (2001) David Lynch "Eagle Scout Missoula Montana" – a guide. London, BFI National Library.
- Paul, W. (1997) Uncanny Theater: The Twin Inheritances of the Movies. *Paradoxa*, Vol.3, No.3-4, pp.321-347.
- Peary, D. (1988) Blue Velvet. In *Cult Movies 3: 50 More of the Classics, the Sleepers, the Weird, and the Wonderful*. New York, Fireside.
- Pellow, K. C. (1990) *Blue Velvet* Once More. *Literature/Film Quarterly*, v.18, n.3, pp.173-178.
- Pensky, M. (1993) *Melancholy Dialectics: Walter Benjamin and the Play of Mourning*. Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press.
- Petro, P. ed. (1995) *Fugitive Images: From Photography to Video*. Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press.
- Pfeil, F. (1993) Family Noir in *Blue Velvet* and *Terminator 2*. In: Copjec, J. ed. *Shades of Noir*: London and New York, Verso, pp.227 – 260.
- Pizzello, S. (1997) Highway to Hell. *American Cinematographer*. March 1997, pp.34 – 42.
- Plantinga, C. (1997) Notes on Spectator Emotion and Ideological Film Criticism. In: Allen, R. and Smith M. eds. *Film Theory and Philosophy*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- Plummer, L. (1997) "I'm Not Laura Palmer": David Lynch's Fractured Fairy Tale. *Literature/Film Quarterly*, v. 25, n. 4, 307-310.
- Poizat, M. (1992) *The Angel's Cry: Beyond the Pleasure Principle in Opera*. Translated by A. Denner. Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press.
- Preston, J. L. (1990) Dantean Imagery in *Blue Velvet*. *Literature/Film Quarterly*, v.18, n.3, pp.167-172.
- Pretty as a Picture: The Art of David Lynch*. (1997) Directed by Toby Keeler. New York, Fox Lorber Home Video [video:VHS].
- Prince, S. (1996) Psychoanalytic Film Theory and the Problem of the Missing Spectator. In: Bordwell, D. and Carroll, N. eds. *Post-Theory: Reconstituting Film Studies*: 71-86. Wisconsin, The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Pym, John (1980/1981) "I pray to God he is an idiot": *The Elephant Man*. *Sight and Sound*, Winter, pp.64-65.
- Rabaté, J-M. (2002) *The Future of Theory*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing.
- Rabinow, P. ed. (1984) *The Foucault Reader*. London, Penguin.
- Rafferty, T. (1986/87) Out of the Blue. *Sight and Sound*, v.56, n.1, Winter, pp.30-33.
- Ramsay, C. (1991) *Twin Peaks: Mountains or Molehills?* *Cineaction*, 24/25, August, pp50 – 59.

- Rank, O. (1971) *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*. London, Karnac Books.
- Rees, A. L. (2002) Moving Spaces. In: Wollen, P. and Kerr, J. eds. (2002) *Autopia: Cars and Culture*. London, Reaktion Books.
- Reitingner, D. W. (1996) Too Long in the Wasteland: Visions of the American West in Film, 1980-1990. *Film & History*, v. 26, n. 1-4, pp.20 – 29.
- Rhodes, E. B. (1998) Lost Highway. *Film Quarterly*, v.51, n. 3, Spring, pp.57 – 61.
- Rifkin, A. (2000) *Ingres Then, and Now*. London and New York, Routledge.
- Rifkin, A. (2003) Waiting and seeing. *Journal of Visual Culture*, v.2, no. 3, December, pp.325 – 339.
- Rodley, C. (1996) David Lynch: Mr Contradiction. *Sight and Sound*, v. 6, issue 7 (July), pp.6 – 10.
- Rodley, C. ed. (1997) *Lynch on Lynch*. London, Faber and Faber Limited.
- Romney, J. (2004) Middle, End, Beginning. *Frieze*. October, issue 86, pp.146-149.
- Ropars-Wuilleumier, C. (1990) How history begets meaning: Alain Renais' *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959). In: Haywood, S. and Vincendeau, G. eds. *French Film: Texts and Contexts*. London and New York, Routledge.
- Rosen, P. ed. (1986) *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Roudinesco, E. (1999) *Jacques Lacan: An Outline of a Life and a History of a System of Thought*. Translated by B. Bray. Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Routt, B. and Routt, D. (1987) Blue Velvet. *Cinema Papers*, n.62, March, p.51.
- Rosen, P. ed. (1986) *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Rosenbaum, J. (1990) The Good, The Bad & The Ugly. *Sight and Sound*, Autumn, p.27.
- Rosenbaum, J. (1995) Bad Ideas: The Art and Politics of *Twin Peaks*. In: Lavery, D. ed. *Full of Secrets: Critical Approaches to "Twin Peaks"*. Detroit Wayne State University Press, pp.22 – 29.
- Rossington, M. and Whitehead, A. eds. (2000) *Between the Psyche and the Polis: Refiguring history in literature and theory*. Hampshire, Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Royle, N. ed. (2000) *Deconstructions: A User's Guide*. Basingstoke and New York, Palgrave.
- Royle, N. (2003) *The Uncanny*. Manchester, Manchester University Press.
- Rugoff, R. (1990) Wild at Heart. *Premiere*, September, pp.81 – 84.

- Rushton, R. (2004) Early, classical and modern cinema: absorption and theatricality. *Screen*, 45:3 Autumn, pp.226-244.
- Saito, A. (1999) Hitchcock's Trilogy: A Logic of Mise en Scène. In: Bergstrom, J. ed. *Endless Night: Cinema and Psychoanalysis, Parallel Histories*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, University of California Press.
- Salecl, R. ed. (1994) *Lacan and Love. New Formations*, No. 23, Summer.
- Salecl, R. and Žižek, S. eds. (1996) *Gaze and Voice as Love Objects*. Durham and London, Duke University Press.
- Salecl, R. ed. (2000) *Sexuation*. Durham and London, Duke University Press.
- Sammon, P. M. (1984) David Lynch's *Dune*. *Cinefantastique*, v.14, n.4 and v.15, n.5, September, pp.28-91.
- Savage J. (1991) Tasteful Tastes. *Sight and Sound*, October, pp.15-17.
- Sargeant, J. and Watson, S. eds. (1999) *Lost Highways: An Illustrated History of Road Movies*, Creation Books.
- Sargeant, J. (1999) "Vanishing Point": Speed Kills. In: Sargeant, J. and Watson, S. eds. *Lost Highways: An Illustrated History of Road Movies*, Creation Books.
- Sensesofcinema (2005) [Online image] Available from:
[www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/01/15/godard ...](http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/01/15/godard...) [Accessed 24 October 2005].
- Sharrett, C. (1991) Wild at Heart. *Cineaste*, v. XVIII, n.2, pp.39 – 41.
- Shattuc, J. M. (1992) Postmodern Misogyny in *Blue Velvet*. *Genders*, n.13, Spring, pp.73-89.
- Sheen, E. and Davison, A. eds. (2004) *The cinema of David Lynch: american dreams, nightmare visions*. London and New York, Wallflower Press.
- Sheen, E. (2004) Going into strange worlds: David Lynch, *Dune* and New Hollywood. In: Sheen, E. and Davison, A. eds. (2004) *The cinema of David Lynch: american dreams, nightmare visions*. London and New York, Wallflower Press.
- Short Films of David Lynch (The) (2001) *Six Men Getting Sick*, 1967; *The Alphabet*, 1968; *The Grandmother*, 1970; *The Amputee*, 1973; *The Cowboy and the Frenchman*, 1987; *Lumiere*, 1995. Directed by David Lynch. David Lynch.com. [video:DVD].
- Sinyard, N. (2000) *Jack Clayton*. Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press.
- Smith, J. (1996) Unheard Melodies? A Critique of Psychoanalytic Theories of Film Music. In: Bordwell, D. and Carroll, N. eds. *Post-Theory: Reconstituting Film Studies*. Wisconsin, The University of Wisconsin Press, pp.230-247.
- Smith, P. ed. (1995) *The Enigmatic Body: Essays on the Arts by Jean Louis Schefer*. Translated by P. Smith. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

- Smith, R. (2000) Deconstruction and Film. In: Royle, N. ed. (2000) *Deconstructions: A User's Guide*. Basingstoke and New York, Palgrave, pp.119-136.
- Stam, R. Burgoyne, R. and Flitterman-Lewis, S. (1992) *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics: Structuralism, Post-Structuralism and Beyond*. London and New York, Routledge.
- Stavrakakis, Y. (1999) *Lacan and the Political*. London and New York, Routledge.
- Steiner, G. (2003) Introduction. In: Benjamin, W. (2003) *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. London and New York, Verso.
- Stern, L. (1991) The Oblivious Transfer: Analyzing Blue Velvet [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2093/papers/stern01.html> [Accessed 18 January 2004].
- Stern, L. (1997) I Think Sebastian, Therefore I...Somersault: Film and the Uncanny. In: *The Return of the Uncanny*, special issue of *Paradoxa: Studies in World Literature Genres*, vol 3, no. 3-4, pp.348-66.
- Straight Story, The* (2002 [1999]) Directed by David Lynch. London, Film Four [video:DVD].
- Strick, P. (2001) Riddle of the Sands. *Sight and Sound*, v.11, n.9, September, pp.20-22.
- Stopklatka.pl (2005) [Online image] Available from: www.stopklatka.pl/dvd/recenzja.asp?wi=12219 [Accessed 24 October 2005].
- Sutton, Martin (1987) Blue Velvet. *Films and Filming*, March, pp.35-36.
- Szebin, F. and Biodrowski, S. (1997) David Lynch on Lost Highway. *Cinefantastique*, v.28, n.10, April, pp.32 – 41.
- Tamminen, E. (2001, 2002) [Online image]. Available from: <http://www.ee.oulu.fi/~escobar/twinpeaks/pic/picMD.html> [Accessed 24 October 2005].
- Taubin, A. (1991) Killing Men. *Sight and Sound*, May, pp.14-19.
- Taubin, A. (2001) In Dreams. *Film Comment*, September/October, pp. 51-54.
- Taylor, M. C. (1990) *Tears*. Albany, State University of New York Press.
- Thompson, K. (1986) The Concept of Cinematic Excess. In: Rosen, P. ed. *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Todorov, T. (1975) *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*. Translated by R. Scholes. Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press.
- Traynor, D. (1997) Lost Highway. *Film Ireland*, October/November. pp.40 – 41.
- Turim, M. (1989) *Flashbacks in Film: Memory & History*. New York and London, Routledge.
- Twin Peaks*. (1990) Two series box set. UK, Screen Entertainment Ltd [video:VHS].

- Twin Peaks: The First Season*. (2002 [1990]) Republic Entertainment [video:DVD].
- Twin Peaks Online (2005) [Internet] Available from: <http://www.twinpeaks.org> [Last Accessed 24 October 2005]
- Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*. (1992) Directed by David Lynch. Second Sight [video:DVD].
- Vanishing Point* (2002 [1971]) Directed by Richard C, Sarafian. Twentieth Century Fox [video:DVD].
- Vermeer J. (c.1669-1670) *The Lacemaker*. Oil on canvas. Louvre, Paris, France. [Internet] Available from: <http://www.abcgallery.com/V/vermeer/vermeer25.html> [Accessed 24 October 2005].
- Vidler, A. (1992) *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, The MIT Press.
- Vinge, J. D. (1984) *The Dune Storybook*. London and Sydney, Sphere Books Limited.
- Wallace, D. W. (1996) David Lynch Keeps His Head. *Premiere (USA)*, v.10, n.1, September, 90 – 95, 108 – 114. [Internet] Available from: <http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood.2093/papers/wallace.html> [Accessed 18 January 2004].
- Walsh, R. (1997) The Ultimate Struggle of Good Vs, Evil Right In Your Backyard: A Mythological Look At Twin Peaks [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2093/papers/walsh.html> [Accessed 18 January 2004].
- Warner, M. (1997) Voodoo Road. *Sight and Sound*, v.7, Issue 7, August, pp.6 – 10.
- Wenders, W. and Godard, J-L. (1991) In conversation. *The Guardian/Sight and Sound*, London Film Festival Special, pp.20 – 22.
- Wilcox, D. (1996) What does chaos theory have to do with art? [Internet]. Article from *Modern Drama*, Toronto, Vol.39, Issue 4: 698-711, Winter. Available from <http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2093/papers/wilcox.html> [Accessed 18 January 2004].
- Wild at Heart*. (2003 [1990]) Directed by David Lynch. Universal (UK) Limited [video:DVD].
- Willis, S. (1997) *High Contrast: Race and Gender in Contemporary Hollywood Film*. Durham and London, Duke University Press.
- Wolfe, R. (1995-97) Ray Wolfe's Online Guide To Eraserhead [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2093/papers/wolfe.html> [Accessed 18 January 2004].
- Wollen, P. and Kerr, J. eds. (2002) *Autopia: Cars and Culture*. London, Reaktion Books.
- Wood, B. (1991) Bluer Velvet. *Video Watchdog*, v.4, March/April, pp.32-45.

Wood, B. (1998) Organic Phenomena [Internet]. Article from Art Papers (Focus on Art and Film), 22/5 Sept.Oct 1998. Available from:
<<http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2093/prints/intorgphen.html>> [Accessed 18 January 2004].

Woods, P. A. (1997) *Weirdsville USA: The Obsessive Universe of David Lynch*. London, Plexus.

Younger, R. (1994) Song in Contemporary Film Noir. *Films in Review*, v.45, n.7/8, July/August, pp.48-50.

Žižek, S. (1989) *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. London and New York, Verso.

Žižek, S. (1991) *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, MIT Press.

Žižek, S. ed. (1992) *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock)*. London and New York, Verso.

Žižek, S. (1994) *The Metastases of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Woman and Causality*. London and New York, Verso.

Žižek, S. (1995) The Lamella of David Lynch. In: Feldstein, R. Fink, B. Jaanus, M eds. (1995) *Reading Seminar XI: Lacan's Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Albany, State University of New York Press, pp.205 – 222.

Žižek, S. (2000) *The Art of the Ridiculous Sublime: On David Lynch's "Lost Highway"*. Seattle, USA, The Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities.

Žižek, S. (2001a) *Enjoy Your Symptom! Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and out*. Second Edition. New York and London, Routledge.

Žižek, S. (2001b) *The Fright of Real Tears: Krzysztof Kieślowski Between Theory and Post-Theory*. London, BFI Publishing.