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**The Audiovisual Eerie:  
Transmediating Thresholds in the Work of David Lynch**  
Holly Rogers

David Lynch's sonic resonances echo through projects and media. Pulsating room tone, eerie *acousmêtre*, electronic wash, static drones, thwarted resolutions and remediated retro textures frequently trouble the image, while imploding lip-syncs violently tear sound from sight and disembodied noises lead attention beyond the edge of the screen. Lynch's soundscapes point beyond themselves. They are disruptive, bleeding between film, television, internet and music video work, resonating in the unseen spaces that surround each narrative centre before overflowing into ancillary worlds. These liminal spaces are occupied by sound alone and mark the threshold not only between projects, but also between music and image, inside and out, real and imagined. Where are the sounds going and should we follow? Who or what is listening and what is heard?

I suggest that Lynch's production of a consistent sonic space across genres and platforms amounts to more than stylistic cohesion. In fact, his distinctive aural textures enable a peculiarly eerie form of transmedia to arise based not on the augmenting strategies of world-building, but on its opposite: on the displacement and deconstruction of knowledge. As we have seen throughout this book, the success of a transmedial extension is predicated on a duality: if the broadening is to be truly "symbiotic", explains David Bordwell, the principal project must simultaneously provide enough narrative core to build on yet leave ample space for imaginative enhancement.<sup>1</sup> Although the enhancement of a film usually develops through

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<sup>1</sup> David Bordwell, "Observations on Film Art: Now Leaving from Platform 1" (2009), at <http://www.davidbordwell.net/blog/2009/08/19/now-leaving-from-platform-1/> (accessed 30 August 2018).

posthumous paratexts in the form of sequels, spinoffs, novels, comics and so on, world-building can also begin before the host project drops, something eloquently accomplished through the pre-screening flyers, adverts and billboards that paved the way for the premieres of *The Blair Witch Project* (Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sánchez, 1999) and *District 9* (Neill Blomkamp, 2009). In both cases, the paraphernalia blurred the boundaries between real and filmed worlds even before screenings took place. Such extensions underpin Henry Jenkins' formative understanding of a transmedia story as that which "unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole".<sup>2</sup> With an emphasis on the creation of backstory, he suggests that this "shifts our identifications and investments in characters and thus helps us to re-watch the scenes again with different emotional resonance. More often, it is about picking up on a detail seeded in the original film and using it as a point of entry into a different story or a portal into exploring another aspect of the world."<sup>3</sup> Yet Bordwell reminds us that "Gap-filling isn't the only rationale for spreading the story across platforms, of course. Parallel worlds can be built, secondary characters can be promoted, the story can be presented through a minor character's eyes. If these ancillary stories become not parasitic but symbiotic, we expect them to engage us on their own terms, and this requires creativity of an extraordinarily high order."<sup>4</sup>

On the surface, Lynch's collaborative work offers just this. For all its enigmatic charm, surrealist twists and loose-ends, for instance, the *Twin Peaks* project nevertheless works

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<sup>2</sup> Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2006), 95-96.

<sup>3</sup> Jenkins, "The Aesthetics of Transmedia: In Response to David Bordwell (Part Three)" (2009), at [http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2009/09/the\\_aesthetics\\_of\\_transmedia\\_i\\_2.html](http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2009/09/the_aesthetics_of_transmedia_i_2.html) (accessed 30 August 2018).

<sup>4</sup> Bordwell, "Observations on Film Art".

around a core crime-drama and its ramifications to offer what Mark Fisher refers to as “a superficial coherence”.<sup>5</sup> This coherence, however fragile and easily de-stabilised, nevertheless provides enough of a framework for parallel world building to manifest between official moving image forms (TV and film), diegetic augmentations (diaries, books, transcriptions, maps) and sonic extensions (sound track albums, previously unreleased music), while fan-based “gap-filling” in the form of internet community building, collaborative twitter literature and sampled, remastered songs deal in specific ways with distinct pockets of the enigma. All make “a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole”, as we shall see below.

Other forms of intertextual fluidity across platforms are more seamless, as individual components are encouraged to morph into each other almost imperceptibly. This is particularly apparent in works that stem from, or reside in, online culture. In her work on contemporary media, Anne Friedberg suggests that “the movie screen, the home television screen, and the computer screen retain their separate locations, yet the types of images you see on each of them are losing their medium-based specificity”.<sup>6</sup> Along similar lines, Jenkins has argued that “because digital media potentially incorporate all previous media, it no longer makes sense to think in medium-specific terms”.<sup>7</sup> In Lynch’s work, different forms of screen media frequently merge, a fusion particularly apparent in his first digital film, *Inland Empire* (2007), a work that seeps beyond its feature borders to remediate not just content, but also the form and structure of media culture more generally. *Rabbits*, an 8-episode web-based ‘sitcom’ (2002; davidlynch.com) that uses a predominantly static shot to show a domestic living room in which actors in rabbit

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<sup>5</sup> Fisher, *The Weird and the Eerie* (London: Repeater Books, 2016), 53.

<sup>6</sup> Friedberg, “The End of Cinema: Multimedia and Technological Change”, in *Reinventing Film Studies*, ed. Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 439.

<sup>7</sup> Jenkins quoted in Dan Harries, *The New Media Book* (London and New York: British Film Institute, 2002), 171.

suits speak in non-sequiturs, randomly punctuated by canned laughter, later became integrated into *Inland Empire*, with some changes in the dialogue and several new scenes. Within their new setting, the low-fi internet quality of the cameo-like segments promotes just such a deconstructed specificity, as they spread out into the film thanks to Lynch's preference for commercial-grade digital cameras: "High-def is a little bit too much information", he explains.<sup>8</sup> Drawing attention to the numerous loops, side-slips, echoes, repetitions and mirroring that infuse and confound the film's narrative, Dennis Lim takes the idea of undoing "medium specificity" further, noting that "not only does *Inland Empire* often look like it belongs on the Internet, it also progresses with the darting, associative logic of hyperlinks".<sup>9</sup> While *Inland Empire* appears to connect and consume the form *and* the content of other media forms, Lynch's more recent internet work exposes the physical "associative logic" of interactive media. Some projects are available exclusively on his website davidlynch.com (such as the animation *DumbLand*, 2002), but others embrace the mosaic possibilities of cross-referencing and nonlinearity that the internet affords. *Interview Project* (2009), for instance, offers 121 brief interviews constructed during "a 20,000-mile road trip over 70 days across and back the United States", directed and edited by Lynch's son Austin Lynch with Jason S.<sup>10</sup> Taken separately, each mini-documentary gives a fleeting glimpse into the lives of various people met along the route; but when placed together, in any order the user chooses, a larger and surprisingly cohesive narrative arises about rural contemporary American life (Figure 1). Other projects use the internet as a conduit between forms in a more transmedial way: before his collaboration with Lykke Li for his second studio

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<sup>8</sup> Lynch quoted in Scott Thill "David Lynch Interviews – Uncut" (2007), in *Wired*, at <https://www.wired.com/2007/01/david-lynch-interviews-uncut/> (accessed 30 August 2018).

<sup>9</sup> Lim, "David Lynch Goes Digital" (2007), in *Slate*, at [http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/dvdxtras/2007/08/david\\_lynch\\_goes\\_digital.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/dvdxtras/2007/08/david_lynch_goes_digital.html) (accessed 30 August 2018).

<sup>10</sup> Lynch speaking in his video introduction to the project at <http://interviewproject.davidlynch.com/www/> (accessed 30 August 2018).

album *The Big Dream* (2013) was released, for instance, he dropped “TBD716”, a mysterious 43-second video, to his YouTube and Vine accounts (the latter as a 6-second version).<sup>11</sup>

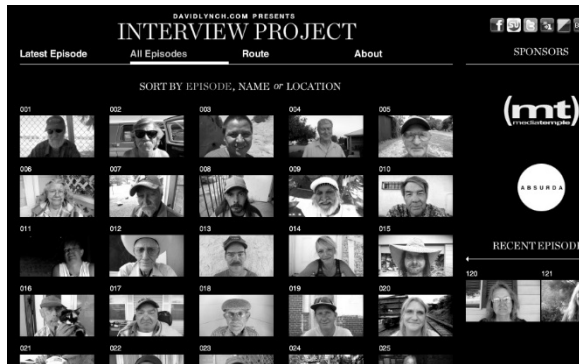


Figure 1.

However, the “darting associative logic” of Lynch’s cross-medial work also problematises traditional notions of transmedia, built on gap-filling, world-building and the undoing of medium-specificity. While the unique combination of narrative core and mysterious diffusion that drives the *Twin Peaks* project can also be found in many of Lynch’s earlier works from *Eraserhead* (1977)—which Michel Chion understands as “a narrative film with dialogue, a hero and a linear story”—through to *Elephant Man* (1980) and *Dune* (1984), some of his later films embrace more surrealistic forms.<sup>12</sup> In her analysis of *Lost Highway* (1997), for instance, Marina Warner identifies a plot that “binds time’s arrow into time’s loop, forcing Euclidian space into Einsteinian curves where events lapse and pulse at different rates and everything might return eternally”.<sup>13</sup> By the time we get to *Mulholland Drive* (2002) and *Inland Empire*, linear progression and coherent forms of causality have been almost entirely replaced by

<sup>11</sup> The video is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bgoRGqHwBE> (accessed 30 August 2018).

<sup>12</sup> Chion, *David Lynch* (London: British Film Institute, 1995), 41.

<sup>13</sup> Warner, “Voodoo Road: *Lost Highway* by David Lynch”, in *Sight and Sound* 7, no 8 (August 1997): 6.

oneiric, labyrinthine loops and curvaceous simulacra, which results in what Brian Jarvis refers to as an “a-destinationality”; a “failure to go anywhere”.<sup>14</sup> As time and plot slip and slide around one other, traditional processes of transmedial story-building are troubled. What to latch onto when things are continually undermined?

It is within this web of contradiction and confusion that Lynch’s particular and unique form of transmedia arises, one enabled not only by character exploration or narrative continuity, but also—and often simultaneously—by a tangled form of *discontinuity*. Within this discontinuity, music and sound assume a vital role. Despite hyperlinking and “Einsteinian curves”, Lynch’s worlds embody an immediately-recognisable aesthetic that forges a distinctive sensory continuity within and between his works, with visual tropes including, surreal objects, doppelgängers, tunnel-vision night shots, deserted streets, doors and curtains, fever dreams and closed-eye vision, and sonic resonances comprising heightened room tone, drone-based synths, ethereal female voices, re-imagined ‘50s songs and a resistance to resolution. Lynch’s visual tropes in particular have encouraged much critical interest. Chion has devoted a chapter of his book on Lynch to these visual recurrences, for instance, offering a “Lynch-kit” that identifies the director’s intertextual zeal for objects such as scissors, chairs, ears, curtains and stages and the atmospheric interferences of wind and smoke.<sup>15</sup> But while Chion hypothesises certain semantic stabilities that drive these recurrences, he doesn’t treat the echoes as a form of transmedial extension between texts. What do these intertextual correlations signify? Do they also gather and develop signification between and through projects, or are they simply stylistic

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<sup>14</sup> Jarvis *Postmodern Cartographies: The Geographical Imagination in Contemporary American Culture* (London: Pluto Press, 1998), 178.

<sup>15</sup> Chion, “Chapter Five – Lynch-Kit: From Alphabet to Word”, in *David Lynch*, 161-198.

echoes across the void? Zoran Samardzija builds on Chion's "Lynch-kit" in her reading of *Inland Empire* to more explicitly acknowledge the snakes-and-ladders-like connectivity between his projects. Like Lim, she constructs her reading on the metaphor of the hyperlink:

It is neither a Möbius strip that endlessly circles around itself, nor is it divisible into sections of fantasy and reality. Its structure is more akin to a web where individual moments hyperlink to each other and other Lynch films—hence the musical number that closes the film which contains obvious allusions to everything from *Blue Velvet* to *Twin Peaks*.<sup>16</sup>

While she stops short of tracing the actual hyperlinks themselves beyond the above acknowledgement of possible allusions, Samardzija's idea more concretely suggests tangible links between projects. In fact, the hyperlink metaphor is a significant one for an understanding of Lynch's strain of transmedia not only in terms of cross-platform storytelling, but also as an allegory for a threshold or portal into spaces that lie beyond substantiating "allusion". These spaces are the key to Lynch's unique form of transmedia. As distinct and original texts, many of his films and internet projects are not immediately relatable to the traditional concepts of transmedia outlined by Jenkins and Bordwell above. Apart from *Twin Peaks*, his films are discrete narratological forms that offer original plots rather than back story or secondary character augmentation. And yet, although most projects come with distinct locations, protagonists and scenarios, there exist stylistic echoes and resonances strong enough to suggest that there is more at play in and between his work than is attributable simply to the distinctive style that drives auteurism.

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<sup>16</sup> Samardzija, "DavidLynch.com: Auteurship in the Age of the Internet and Digital Cinema", (2010), in *Scope*, at <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/scope/documents/2010/february-2010/samardzija.pdf> (accessed 30 August 2018).

Many of these echoes are sonic. Sound design and music stitch many of Lynch's transmedial components together and have formed an integral—even driving—part of his idiosyncratic style from the outset. The director has often spoken of sound as the catalyst in his early progression from static art into the moving image, for instance. Referring to his painting, he explained that: “As I looked at what I'd done, I heard a noise. Like a gust of wind. And it came all at once. I imagined a world in which painting would be in perpetual motion”.<sup>17</sup> As a driving force for his subsequent work with the moving image, sound is a frequent component of the early filmmaking process, often coming before principle photography to assume influence over visual pace and rhythm during filming (he famously plays music on set and wears headphones while directing).<sup>18</sup> The result, he says, are “Films [which] are 50 percent visual and 50 percent sound. Sometimes sound even overplays the visual.”<sup>19</sup>

Building on Chion's identification of Lynch's intertextual echoes, and pressing further into Samardzija's hyperlink metaphor of visual “allusion”, I suggest that, if we seek not only visual but also sonic resonances and remediations between projects and platforms, a broader, yet paradoxical understanding of *audiovisual* transmedia can arise. The other authors in this module react to Lynch's audiovisuality through the coexistent forms of duration that determine quantum theory (Greg Hainge), the aesthetics of slowing, slowness and vari-speed (John McGrath) and a sense of formlessness derived from Simondon's theory of individuation and in-formation (Elena

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<sup>17</sup> Lynch cited in Chion, *David Lynch*, 10.

<sup>18</sup> Dorian Lynskey explains how Badalamenti began the scoring process for *Twin Peaks*, for example: “He scored the pilot episode before seeing a single frame, translating Lynch's desecry options into music, which the director then used to inform the mood and rhythm of scenes and performances.”; “‘Make it like the wind, Angelo’: How the *Twin Peaks* soundtrack came to haunt music for nearly 30 years”, in *Guardian* (Friday 24 March 2017), at <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2017/mar/24/twin-peaks-soundtrack-david-lynch-angelo-badalamenti> (accessed 30 August 2018).

<sup>19</sup> Lynch speaking in “The Monster Meets...Filmmaker David Lynch”, in *Monster Cable* (Fall 1998), at <http://www.lynchnet.com/monster.html> (accessed 30 August 2018).

Del Río). Although working along similar lines, I focus in on moments of audiovisual rupture, arguing that Lynch's undoing of traditional transmedial forms operates in direct opposition to the gap-filling, or "parallel" worldbuilding role often played by ancillary or paratextual projects. In Lynch's work this is achieved through an undoing of conventional audiovisual practice, particularly in the moments when the sonic "overplays the visual"; or rather, undermines or contradicts what we are seeing. As we shall see, his onscreen music often violently ruptures audiovisual synchronicity, while his soundscapes coalesce from myriad disembodied sources. The holes between what is seen and what is heard release sound from the grip of the diegesis and allow it to overspill its boundaries, as our attention is constantly drawn to what is beyond the frame; where are the sources of these sounds? What is it that we are hearing? Significantly, many of Lynch's soundscapes outstrip their visual containers without linking to anything that supports, explains or bolsters what Jenkins calls the "mothership" project.<sup>20</sup> In fact, audiovisual ruptures and disembodied sounds do not lead to substantiated worlds or knowledge but rather to greater uncertainty, hovering beyond the limit of sight, and reverberating between platforms, worlds and dreams. Such sonic emphasis on what is beyond the frame initiates a type of augmentation that troubles Bordwell's notion of "gap-filling". However, certain sonic gestures, particularly those that produce an audiovisual dissonance, frequently reappear in different texts, often at moments of significant emotional or aesthetic upheaval. This suggests a form of sustained aesthetic development that manifests not at the level of plot, but rather transmedially, through and across different, seemingly unrelated, texts. By embracing audio and visual fissures, Lynch's cross-project transmedia arises through absences and echoes; or what Mark Fischer has described as an "eerie absence".<sup>21</sup> It offers an obscuration of linearity and causality; it

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<sup>20</sup> Jenkins, "The Aesthetics of Transmedia".

<sup>21</sup> Fisher, *The Weird and the Eerie*.

operates through diffusion and blockage; and it leads us further and further away from the familiar. Lynch's transmedia does not fill gaps, in other words; it extends and promotes them.

### ***Twin Peaks and the Undoing of Transmedial Auteurism***

Although often touted as an exemplar auteur, Lynch's creative process is openly collaborative. Working with the same actors, cinematographers, editors, costume designers and casting directors across projects, Lynch's team-based, assemblage approach to creativity forges transmedial flow through many voices: "while rooted in Hollywood production practice", argues Annette Davison, he also "offers a radical reconfiguration of it".<sup>22</sup> This reconfiguration begins to undo the classic concept of the auteur as a singular force reliant on what Andrew Sarris understood, in his seminal article, as "the distinguishable personality of the director" which manifests over several films to produce "certain recurrent characteristics of style, which serve as his signature".<sup>23</sup> Looking further into the "recurrent characteristics" across a director's work, Timothy Corrigan identifies a shift the 1980s, in which the auteur became commodified, a star in his/her own right and a marker of meaning that audiences recognise and use to interpret a film (or other text) before and after experiencing it: during this time, auteurism evolved into "a way of viewing and receiving [...] rather than as a mode of production", he writes.<sup>24</sup> While Corrigan acknowledges signature style as a tool for reception as much as production, authorship also needs to be considered vertically in order to acknowledge the multifaceted, assemblage approach

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<sup>22</sup> Davidson, "'Up in Flames': Love, Control and Collaboration in the Soundtrack to *Wild At Heart*", in *The Cinema of David Lynch: American Dreams, Nightmare Visions*, ed. Erica Sheen and Davison (London and New York: Wallflower Press, 2004), 120.

<sup>23</sup> Sarris, "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962", in *Film Culture* 27 (1962-3): 6-7.

<sup>24</sup> Corrigan, "The Commerce of Auteurism: A Voice Without Authority", in *New German Critique* 49 (1990): 44.

to creativity required for filmmaking. Despite working with several composers in his early work (Peter Ivers' original song "In Heaven" for *Eraserhead*, for instance, John Morris' score for *Elephant Man* or Toto's music and Brian Eno's "Prophecy Theme" for *Dune*), Lynch's connection with composer Angelo Badalamenti was instant and the duo worked together on *Blue Velvet* (2001), *Wild at Heart* (1990), *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me* (1992), *The Straight Story* (1999), *Lost Highway* and *Mulholland Drive*, on television shows *Twin Peaks*, *On the Air* (1992) and *Hotel Room* (1993; Lynch did the sound design), the theatre project *Industrial Symphony No 1: The Dream of the Broken Hearted* (1990) and the internet series *Rabbits*. Lynch's noise-based soundscapes are similarly collaborative, crafted at first in conjunction with Alan Splet (for the films *The Grandmother* [1970], *Eraserhead*, *Dune* and *Blue Velvet*), before a less-successful partnership with Randy Thom (*Lost Highway*) promoted him to take over the sound-design role himself.<sup>25</sup> These two long-standing collaborations had a profound impact on what has become known as the director's "signature style". As we shall see, when Lynch broke with Badalamenti to write his own music for *Inland Empire*, the soundtrack remains awash with the composer's drone-based, throbbing textures; likewise, the soundscapes crafted by Lynch since Splet's early death retain their noisy and ambiguous grain.

When combined with the power of expectation, an assemblage approach to construction can forge a distinctive voice strong enough to withstand—or integrate—substantial intervention. This is certainly true of Lynch's "signature" which develops not only through multiple close collaborations, but also provides the space for sustained directorial intervention and fan

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<sup>25</sup> Chion write that: "More than ever, Lynch took part in the construction of the soundtrack of *Fire Walk With Me*. He singlehandedly took on the film's sound design and, in addition, collaborated in the mixing, being credited as sound designer and as one of the three 're-recorders'"; Chion, *David Lynch*, 150.

augmentation. In fact, he is a useful example of what Roberta Pearson calls a “hyphenate-auteur”, a type of practitioner that emerged during late ‘90s television projects able to fulfil several meta roles—director, writer, creator, producer, composer—whilst reliant on teams of writers to mobilise things at a local level.<sup>26</sup> Joss Whedon (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, 1997-2003; *Angel*, 1999-2004), for instance, embraces a flexi-narrative format in which his responsibility for large-scale framing storylines is balanced by writers who work closely on discrete episodes. This team-driven process befuddles the idea of authorship, although a strong “signature style” can hold things together at the level of reception.

Lynch’s engagement with transparent transmedial play and assemblage authorship can be seen in and around the world of *Twin Peaks*, co-created with Mark Frost, which manifested through two original series (1990-1991) and a prequel film (*Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me*, 1992) before returning to the small screen for a third series (*Twin Peaks: The Return*, 2017). Many of the episodes from the first two series were directed by others, according to a carefully prepared plan overseen by the co-creators. And yet, the style is largely consistent, persuasive and overflows its boundaries in myriad ways. Initially, the world bled into a series of tie-in 30-second adverts for Georgia Coffee (1992), for instance. Made for Japanese television and including many of the main cast members and snippets of Badalamenti’s score, these shorts are an early example of cross-media seriality as they “exist in the same story world”, argues Agnes Malkinson: “this is evident not only in the inclusion of some of the main personalities from the series, but also in the consistent treatment of character dynamics, and a fittingly typical plot.”<sup>27</sup> In fact, the many

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<sup>26</sup> Pearson, “The Writer-Producer in American Television”, in *Contemporary Television Series*, ed. Michael Hammond and Lucy Mazdon (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 18.

<sup>27</sup> Malkinson, “‘Damn Fine Coffee’ Advertising: David Lynch’s TV Commercial Adaptation of *Twin Peaks*”, in *Senses of Cinema* (July 2016), at <http://sensesofcinema.com/2016/twin-peaks/26839/> (accessed 30 August 2018).

representations of *Twin Peaks* embody the “associative logic” of transmedial flow to an extraordinary extent, transcending authorship and media specificity to create a substantiated and hyper-flexible world that extends far beyond the boundaries of the “mothership”.

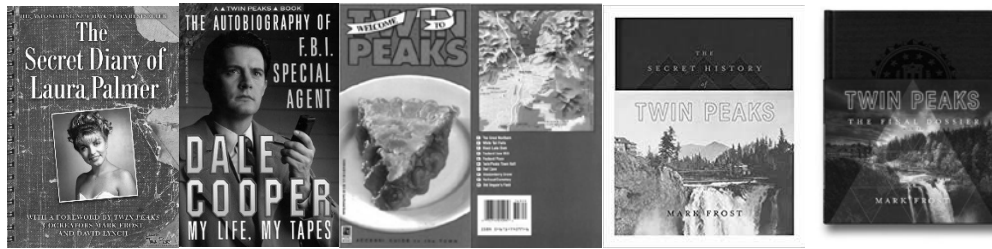


Figure 2.1-2.6.

These extensions were not limited to moving-image media. With the original series, there also came the opportunity to buy several transmedial texts that form what Jason Mittell refers to as “a *diegetic extension*” to the filmed world, including *The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer* (Jennifer Lynch, 1990; Figure 2.1), a reproduction that included details about characters and events that would later reappear in the prequel film; *The Autobiography of F.B.I. Special Agent Dale Cooper: My Life, My Tapes* (Scott Frost, 1991, Figure 2.2) which operates as the transcripts of Cooper’s Dictaphone; and *Twin Peaks: An Access Guide to the Town* (Lynch and Frost, 1991, Figure 2.3), which acts as a tour guide to the fictional area, with maps and histories, as well as information on local wildlife, diners and culture.<sup>28</sup> Filled with unique, “gap-filling” material, these paratexts augment characterisation, provide clues and insight and flesh out physical geography. Significantly, some of these diegetic extensions emerged independently of Lynch. Frost provided two epistolary novels that straddled the release of the third series, for instance:

<sup>28</sup> Mittell, *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 298 (italics his).

*The Secret History of Twin Peaks* (2016, Figure 2.4), formed from notes, clippings, documents and letters by someone known mysteriously only as “The Archivist”; and *Twin Peaks: The Final Dossier* (2017, figure 2.5) that provides context and insight on events between the second and third series. These blurrings between real and fictional worlds extend to other artifacts: available to buy were Black Lodge candles, pillows from the Red Room, coffee cups from the Diner. Then there are the actual physical recreations in the form of yearly Twin Peaks conventions that allowed fans to meet the actors and the recreation of specific spaces, such as the pop-up Road House Bar on LA’s Melrose Avenue (December 8 2017-January 1 2018), that served Cherry Pie and specially-named cocktails. These physical spaces fused Lynch and Frost’s fictional world with the real one.

The sound and music of *Twin Peaks*—in its original and ancillary forms—is one of the most consistent elements of the world’s transmedial percolation. As with many other components of the project, they developed through close collaborative processes. In preparation for the first series of *Twin Peaks*, Lynch and Badalamenti, together with singer Julee Cruise and a band of carefully-picked musicians, including guitarist Vinnie Bell and jazz drummer Grady Tate, set up in a New York studio to work on three closely-linked ventures: Cruise’s first album, *Floating Into the Night* (1989), the soundtrack for *Twin Peaks* and *Industrial Symphony No 1*. Although distinct products, the transmedial resonances are clear to see. The album’s second track, “Falling”, morphed into the iconic “Twin Peaks Theme”, for instance, while most of the other songs made an appearance in the series either as dramatic music or performed by Cruise in person at the Roadhouse. Similarly, four songs from the album were woven into *Industrial Symphony*, which also saw Cruise cast as The Dreamself of the Heartbroken Woman. The

transmedial blurring of these projects extended further when components of the theatre plot later morphed into elements of *Wild at Heart*.

While Cruise's album acted as a pivot point in the transmedial flow between several of Lynch's projects then, *Twin Peaks* subsequently produced an extensive array of responsive sonic paratexts, including 5 official soundtrack albums.<sup>29</sup> While a few unreleased Badalamenti compositions were included on these albums, the most powerful sonic form of world-extension was found on davidlynch.com as *The Twin Peaks Archive* (2011-2012), a collection of 212 previously unreleased, unused or rare tracks from the television and film worlds, available for digital download. This limited time-release resource allowed people to imagine un-visualised scenarios, extended storylines and emotional augmentations through sound alone. But while these sounds extended the Twin Peak's world through aurality, Lynch stretched music more concretely beyond the series in several ways, most notably through his organisation of "The Music Of David Lynch Benefit Concert", where Karen O, Duran Duran, Moby and Lykke Li joined Chrysta Bell and Badalamenti to perform music from Lynch's films at the Theater at Ace Hotel Los Angeles (1 April 2015, Figure 3). Through television serials, a film and adverts to diaries, maps, cherry pies, records and concerts, then, the audiovisual worlds of Twin Peaks flow from closely-authored moving-image media to extensive and participatory activities that open wide the idea of story-telling and authorship. This has important ramifications for the idea of transmedia in the digital age.

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<sup>29</sup> *Soundtrack from Twin Peaks* (1990), *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992), *Twin Peaks Music: Season Two Music and More* (2007). The third series had two soundtracks, both released on 8 September 2017 by Rhino Records: *Twin Peaks: Limited Event Series Original Soundtrack* and *Twin Peaks: Music from the Limited Event Series*.



Figure 3.

### Fandom and Transmedial Flow Beyond the Auteur

In much of his work, Jenkins has sought to liberate our understanding of transmedial storytelling as both a narratological and a technological process by repositioning emphasis onto the new and emancipating strategies of “work—and play”. The merging of media, he suggests, encourages spectators to perform unique interpretative strategies as they navigate between and through platforms: “convergence represents a cultural shift as consumers are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content.”<sup>30</sup> Within this emergent

<sup>30</sup> Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 3.

networked culture, argues Jenkins, “The meanderings of multimedia browsing can’t be described with the confidence we can ascribe to a film’s developing organization. Facing multiple points of access, no two consumers are likely to encounter story information in the same order.”<sup>31</sup> While we can see this happening in the *Twin Peaks* universe, it is also more than this: when fan contributions are taken into account, the world augments and multiplies in unpredictable and uncontrollable ways, with the spaces between cross-medial elements becoming a vital part of the connective fluidity.

The mysteries surrounding the murder of Laura Palmer and the strangeness of *Twin Peaks* and its occupants, for instance, provided ample opportunity for what Matt Hill refers to as “endlessly deferred narratives”.<sup>32</sup> It wasn’t long before the officially-sanctioned extensions to *Twin Peaks* splintered into a bewildering array of fan-based and participatory extensions that not only sought to fill the strategic gaps in the enigma, but also actively to promote and extend them. Fan fiction, internet hunting, discussion pages and twitter groups diffused and “endlessly deferred” the project, which quickly took on a life of its own. Producing a post-medial, post-cinematic example of viral “spreadability”, a concept proposed by Jenkins that operates in “contrast to older models of stickiness which emphasize centralized control over distribution and attempts to maintain ‘purity’ of message”, fan-produced storytelling decentred both text and its authors.<sup>33</sup> This is most apparent in the 2014 enterprise “@Enter the Lodge” which self-identifies as “a fan-made work of *Twin Peaks* Twitter fiction”.<sup>34</sup> Here, over 50 characters from

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<sup>31</sup> Jenkins, “The Aesthetics of Transmedia”.

<sup>32</sup> Hill, *Fan Cultures* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 101.

<sup>33</sup> Jenkins, “If it Doesn’t Spread, It’s Dead (Part One): Media Viruses and Memes” (2009), at [http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2009/02/if\\_it\\_doesnt\\_spread\\_its\\_dead\\_p.html](http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2009/02/if_it_doesnt_spread_its_dead_p.html) (accessed 30 August 2018).

<sup>34</sup> See <http://www.enterthelodge.com/about/> (accessed 30 August 2018).

the original series, each with their own Twitter account, recreated events from March 1989—the date of the penultimate episode—before extending into an imagined Series 3 (Figure 4). Twitter storytelling, as an example of the intersecting platforms of the post-cinematic, can here be seen both as an attempt to grapple with the ambiguities of *Twin Peaks*, but also collectively to invent and play with the very nature of its abstruse forms. In this sense, the open-ended databases being used to explore and flesh out the fictional world resemble the endless pluralities of that world itself.

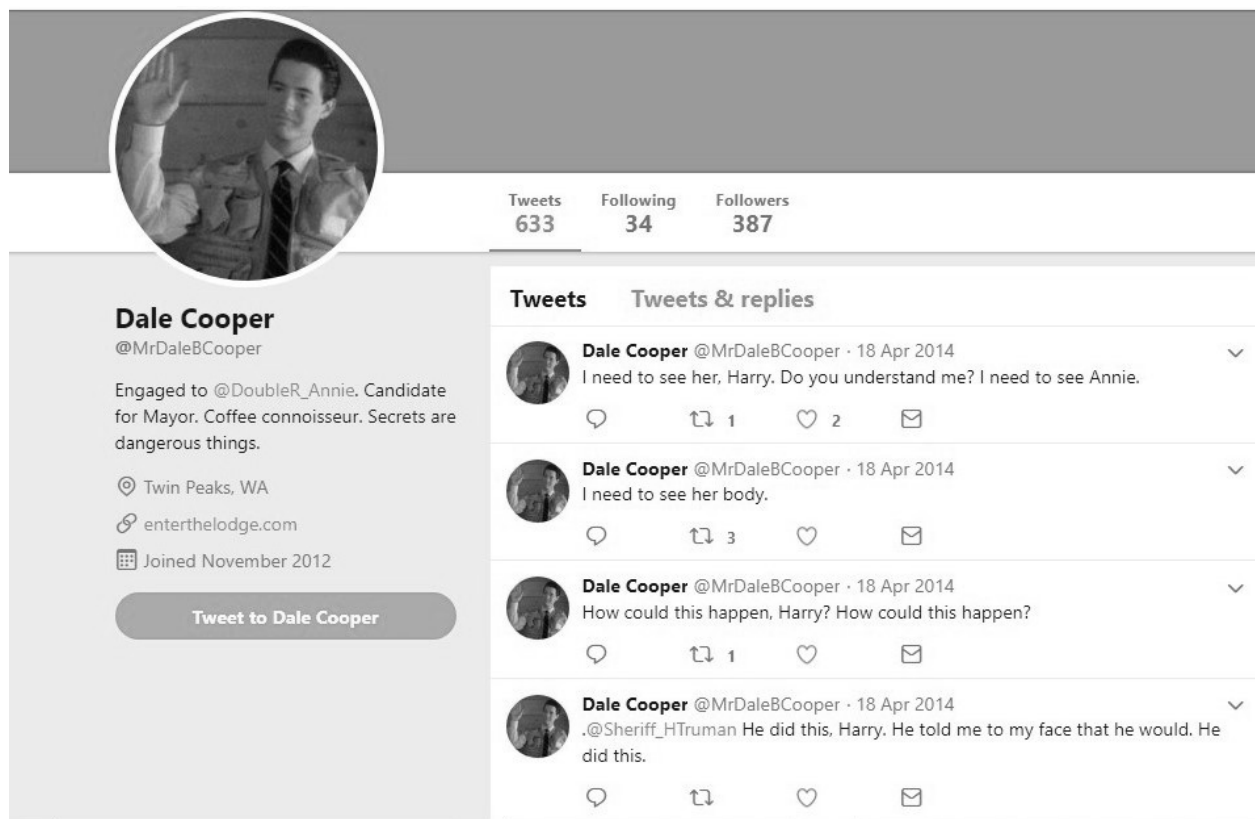


Figure 4.

Digital platforms have also impacted on the remediation of the *Twin Peaks* soundworlds, which have undergone radical configuration through sampling, quotation and variation, including

Moby's career-launching rave reworking of "Laura Palmer's Theme" for "GO (Woodtick Mix)" (1990), Xiu Xiu's experimental cover album in 2016, *Xiu Xiu Plays the Music of Twin Peaks*, a cover of "Sycamore Trees" (Badalamenti / Lynch, *Fire Walk With Me*) by Niitch (2016) and Chrysta Bell's 2017 cover of "Falling", which offered an uncanny interconnection through her concurrent appearance as Special FBI Agent Tamara Preston in *Twin Peaks: The Return*. Others have extended the sonic worlds in more clearly transmedial ways. Mount Eerie's "Between Two Mysteries" (*Wind Poem*, 2009), samples Badalamenti's "Laura Palmer theme" to weave a lyrical evocation around the mythical location: "The town rests in the valley beneath Twin Peaks / Buried in Space / What goes up there in the night / In that dark, blurry place?". Bastille's "Laura Palmer" (*Bad Blood*, 2013) offers a different response, with no musical allusions to the world, but a close engagement with the protagonist, as singer Dan Smith explains, "On 'Laura Palmer', I wanted to capture the urgency of the image of her coming off a motorbike and running through the forest".<sup>35</sup>

While the official "diegetic extensions" of *Twin Peaks* demonstrate traditional forms of transmedial world-building, then, fan-driven extensions fracture off in volatile ways. Speaking about the reception of his song amongst his British indie-pop fans, Smith remarked: "I enjoyed fans asking, 'Who's Laura Palmer? Is it your ex-girlfriend?' I still get people saying, 'Thank you for introducing me to *Twin Peaks*.'"<sup>36</sup> Returning to Jenkins' observation that multimedia browsing opens up "multiple points of access", we can see that the porosity of *Twin Peaks* enables just this. Already replete with enigmatic gaps, the world troubles traditional and discrete forms of storytelling by activating audiences in two complimentary ways; the first by asking us

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<sup>35</sup> Smith quoted in Lynskey, "'Make it like the wind, Angelo'".

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

to “work” in order to fill in the gaps in a story that is open-ended and enigmatic; and second, by inviting us to “play” through physical participation in the form of interactive internet sites and twitter discussions.

### **The Wrongness of the Weird and the Absence of the Eerie**

While the many worlds of Twin Peaks demonstrate myriad possibilities for transmedia and assemblage auteurism, when visual and sonic tropes link across different projects, the concept of world-building morphs into something more nebulous. Rather than the substantiation of specific character, plot or specific event, connections between works can manifest at a more elusive, conceptual level. Predicated on fissure and absence, ethereal forms of transmedia can open a space for the eerie to arise. In his critical evaluation of the concept, Fisher positioned the eerie in close but oppositional relation to the weird, or that which arises through the intrusion of the outside into our world. Such incursion “involves a sensation of *wrongness*: a weird entity or object is so strange that it makes us feel that it should not exist, or at least it should not exist here.”<sup>37</sup> Speaking in relation to H. P. Lovecraft’s fiction, Fisher notes that “the weird is constituted by a presence—the presence of *that which does not belong*. In some cases of the weird ...the weird is marked by an exorbitant presence, a teeming which exceeds our capacity to represent it.”<sup>38</sup> Situated beyond comprehension, yet utterly compelling, the weird occupies a transgressive position within extant modes of understanding, opening up what Herbert Graves calls a “third aesthetic” that sits between the traditional categories of Beauty and Sublimity: this liminal realm, he argues, is the place where the uncanny

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<sup>37</sup> The quote continues: “Yet if the entity or object *is* here, then the categories which we have up until now used to make sense of the world cannot be valid. The weird thing is not wrong, after all: it is our conceptions that must be inadequate”; Fisher, *The Weird and the Eerie*, 15.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

gives rise to unsettled states governed by uncertainty and incomprehension.<sup>39</sup> Weird intrusions recur (in moderated form) throughout Lynch's work, from the frequent appearance of supranatural characters—the Mystery Man in *Lost Highway*, Bob and the Giant in *Twin Peaks* and Phantom in *Inland Empire*—to those such as *Twin Peaks*' Log Lady who are able to manifest weird conjunctions.<sup>40</sup> Referring to *Twin Peaks*, Chion writes of “characters who belong to the parallel dimensions, who appear in fantasies and dream, loom up among the gaps in the tissue of reality or communicate with other forces.”<sup>41</sup> The fractured tissues of reality also give rise to psychological disturbances such as dreams and illusions that encourage and generate transmogrification: Fred becomes Pete in *Lost Highway*, Sandy and Dorothy assume a parallel existence in *Blue Velvet*, Betty morphs into Diane in *Mulholland Drive*, Sue incorporates Nikki in *Inland Empire*, the White Lodge transitions to its black version in *Twin Peaks* and Dale Cooper assumes an evil doppelgänger and his tulpa Dougie Jones in *The Return*.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Graves, *Making Strange: Beauty, Sublimity and the (Post) Modern 'Third' Aesthetic* (New York and Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), 10-11.

<sup>40</sup> Fisher uses *Mulholland Drive* as an example of weirdness arising from thwarted expectation by which “the film feels like a ‘wrong’ version of a recognizable Hollywood film-type”; *The Weird and the Eerie*, 57.

<sup>41</sup> Chion, *David Lynch*, 109.

<sup>42</sup> Some of these transitions are noted in Isabella van Elferen, “Dream Timbre: Notes on Lynchian Sound Design”, in *Music, Sound and Filmmakers: Sonic Style in Cinema*, ed. James Wierzbicki (New York and London: Routledge, 2012), 178.



Figures 5.1-5.6.

Fundamental to all these weird collocations is the notion of the threshold. Intrusion, coexistence, morphing and transition require movement between one's state—or one reality—to another.

Within Lynch's work, these physical and psychological transitions are signalled by several different forms of liminality. The recurring trope of heavy curtains, which appear when narrative cohesion is at its most vulnerable, for example, clearly signals confusion: is it night or day; what is behind, a window or a door; who, what or where lies beyond the folds? The velvet curtains of The Red Room in *Twin Peaks* (Figure 5.1), with their dual function to conceal and reveal, designate the threshold that divides worlds and times, a visual motive that echoes both within this world—Nadine Hurley's fervent desire for "silent drape runners"—and between projects:

the curtains that partially conceal the protagonist in the opening scenes of *Elephant Man* for example (Figure 5.2). “I don’t know where it came from, but I love curtains. There is something so incredibly cosmically magical about curtains opening and revealing a new world” explains Lynch.<sup>43</sup> Notably, however, curtains frequently form the backdrop of music performance, as if to signal the power of sound to move the audience between states. They hang heavily behind the Lady in the Radiator’s performance of “In Heaven” (*Eraserhead*, Figure 5.3), Dorothy Vallens’ version of “Blue Velvet” (Bobby Vinton, 1963, Figure 5.4) at the Slow Club in the eponymous film, Rebekah Del Rio’s Spanish *a cappella* rendition of Roy Orbison’s 1962 hit “Crying” (*Mulholland Drive*, Figure 5.5), through to the guest performances, heard in their entirety, in the Bang Bang Club, that close each episode of *The Return* (Figure 5.6). Echoing Lynch’s own sentiment, Fisher, who situates curtains and thresholds firmly within the weird as they demarcate the juxtaposition of worlds, or states, points out that curtains “do not only mark a threshold; they constitute one: an egress to the outside”.<sup>44</sup> This is significant here. For Lynch, curtains do not simply denote a clashing of physical or ontological states, but signify the presence of the “outside”. This is particularly apparent in the endless gateways and passageways that drive what Fisher describes as the “labyrinthine, rabbit-warren anarchitecture” of *Inland Empire*: in a way reminiscent of Lim’s hyperlink metaphor, Fisher explains that “Each corridor in the film... is potentially the threshold to another world.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Lynch in “David Lynch Interview: ‘There is Something So Incredibly Cosmically Magical About Curtains’”, at <https://www.timeout.com/london/art/david-lynch-interview-there-is-something-so-incredibly-cosmically-magical-about-curtains> (accessed 30 August 2018).

<sup>44</sup> Fisher, *The Weird and the Eerie*, 53.

<sup>45</sup> Fisher, *The Weird and the Eerie*, 57.

While curtains symbolise the transition between dream world and reality, the doors of *Inland Empire* signify in a less ambiguous way. *Axxon N* is one of the clearest examples of Lynch's thresholds, and can be read as a metaphor for networked culture and its endless linking to other portals. Originally intended as a nine-episode mini-series for Lynch's website (2002), *Axxon N* was never made. However, it became a shifting lynchpin for *Inland Empire*; acting as a portal into other realities, the name appears on various doors, inviting protagonist Nikki / Sue to pass through into the twilight zones of altered consciousness and ambiguous locations. The first time she passes through a door with *Axxon N* inscribed on it, she finds herself first on Stage 4, where *On High in Blue Tomorrows* is being shot; the next time, on Hollywood Boulevard, it initiates a physical split as she spies herself across the street; and the third time she finds herself in Sue's house where she shoots the Phantom. Greg Hainge surmises that the appearance of the word initiates "an aporia, a point at which we are required to relinquish our normal modes of understanding and find new connections that are not so obviously causal". These aporetic moments, he writes, "force[] different spatiotemporal realities to inhabit the same space".<sup>46</sup> A film within a film, a play continually in the process of becoming and awash with a confusion of ontological and televised spaces, *Inland Empire* can be read as a commentary on the weird transmedial ability for art to constantly consume and remediate itself.

Alongside the strangeness of a weird presence, explains Fisher, lies a disquieting absence:

The eerie, by contrast, is constituted by a *failure of absence* or by a *failure of presence*. The sensation of the eerie occurs either when there is something present where there should be nothing, or is there is [sic] nothing present when there should be something.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Hainge, *Noise Matters: Towards an Ontology of Noise* (New York, London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 190, 191.

<sup>47</sup> Fisher, *The Weird and the Eerie*, 61.

While a failure of presence often arises in desolate landscapes and ruins that give the sense that something significant has left the space, Fisher posits the “eerie cry” of a bird as an example of the failure of absence, a sound that suggests a motivation more elusive than simple avian impulse.<sup>48</sup> But what? Vital to the eerie is the feeling of otherness and the realization that resolution will require an understanding that lies outside of the normal state of things, as Fisher explains:

Such speculations are intrinsic to the eerie, and once the questions and enigmas are resolved, the eerie immediately dissipates... It must be stressed at this point that not all mysteries generate the eerie. There must also be a sense of alterity, a feeling that the enigma might involve forms of knowledge, subjectivity and sensation that lie beyond common experience.<sup>49</sup>

Unresolved absences pulse through Lynch’s work: deserted corridors, deserts, forests and endless empty roads that throb with the sense that someone, or something, has just departed, are countered by spaces pregnant with artifice, illusion and theatricality that, writes Philip Brophy, “are fixed at the borders of towns, the edge of night, the precipice of morality.”<sup>50</sup> The combination of these locational borders, edges and precipices with the murky visibility of Lynch’s tunnel vision, chiaroscuro, unusual camera angles and regular focus on unfolding weather conditions—mist billowing down a mountain side, branches slowly blowing in the wind—leaves the edges of the frame, and the narrative, open. Although Fisher situates Lynch’s obsession with thresholds firmly within the weird, these perforations nevertheless also conjure

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Fisher, *The Weird and the Eerie*, 62.

<sup>50</sup> Brophy, “Parties in Your Head: From the Acoustic to the Psycho-Acoustic”, in *The Oxford Handbook of New Audiovisual Aesthetics*, ed. John Richardson, Claudia Gorbman and Carol Vernallis (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 317-18.

up both types of eerie: as Isabella van Elferen asks, these are “doors to *what* or *where*?”<sup>51</sup> But absence also invades the transfigurations of the characters outlined above: as they merge and reform, an eerie absence, or void, is revealed—where did the original go? Where are we now? And where is everyone else?

In Lynch’s work, moments of visual desolation are often compounded by an abundance of sound. Yet while initially this may seem to restore some plenitude to the eerie void, Lynch’s soundscapes are themselves infused with both the failure of absence *and* the failure of presence: as The Man from Another Place explains as he dances to Badalamenti’s noirish “Dance of the Dream Man” (*Twin Peaks*, 1990) in the Red Room, “Where we come from ... there is always music in the air”. Lynch’s worlds—which sound to David Toop “like the resonating chambers of multiple nightmares”—evoke the eerie through both audio (dis)placement and sonic composition.<sup>52</sup> Sound that hovers “in the air” without apparent source constantly displaces our attention and allows an eerie alterity to seep into the diegesis: who is making this disembodied sound; which image does it connect to; what is just beyond the frame? Withholding the source can produce an unsettling sense that there “is something present where there should be nothing”, while a sudden rupture to a well-established audiovisual connection can reveal the illusion behind traditional cinematic forms of representation. Such troubled audiovisuality can be further compounded by a sonic texture that is also ambiguous. In Lynch’s worlds, then, the aural eerie can arise through abstruse sound design, ruptured synchronicity, mysterious nostalgia and unusual stylistic juxtapositions. Significantly, these distinctive moments of audiovisual disruption recur across projects.

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<sup>51</sup> van Elferen, “Dream Timbre”, 176.

<sup>52</sup> Toop, *Sinister Resonance: The Mediumship of the Listener* (New York and London: Continuum, 2010), 115.

## The Audiovisual Eerie

### 1. Audiovisual Rupture

Within Lynch's worlds, things are often not as they seem. The troubling of expectation is at its most lucid when audiovisual synchronicity is destabilised, or broken altogether. While such moments result in an audiovisual rupture at the local level, they can, paradoxically, also operate as a cohesive trope able to connect disparate projects in a sonic equivalent to Chion's visual "Lynch-kit". This can happen in several ways. First, interference can occur when things sound but not in the way that we would expect—the transmogrification of voice in *Twin Peaks*' Red Room is a good example, where The Man from Another Place and a Laura Palmer look-alike speak what appears to be backwards—or when previously secure audiovisual connections are pulled apart. Unlike a dramatic music track, which has become such a customary addition to a mainstream film's world that an audience rarely seek the source of the nondiegetic music, real-world sounds are often used to give a film space an illusory sense of fidelity through tight audiovisual synchronicity. Walter Murch, for instance, has famously asserted that the re-association of image and sound during postproduction—and the resultant audiovisual synchronicity—is the "fundamental pillar upon which the creative use of sound rests, and without which it would collapse."<sup>53</sup> There are many instances in Lynch's work when an apparently reliable bond between sound and image proves deceptive, as van Elferen has noted:

Extra diegetic music or white noise often suddenly appears to be diegetic when a shot of a jukebox, radiator, or lamp explains the source of the sound, but when this alleged

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<sup>53</sup> Murch, "Stretching Sound to Help the Mind See", in *New York Times* (1 October 2000), at <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/10/01/arts/01MURC.html?pagewanted=all> (accessed 30 August 2018).

source suddenly gets turned off, or the film proceeds to another scene, the sound is still there, and the viewer is left wondering whether it was extra-diegetic after all.<sup>54</sup>

Chion points to several of these moments, including one in *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me*, where he identifies the beat of a ceiling fan in the Palmer house that Leyland turns on when about to possess Laura as one of the main, and most consistent, sound effects, yet one that eventually significantly outstrips its visual source as it is later present at the scene of Laura's murder.

Other examples are more consistent and bleed between texts. Close-up shots of a record stylus form a clear transmedial echo across projects, for instance, and yet the relationship of image to sound is often awkward. The audiovisual trope gathers signification until its suggestion that all is not as it seems—that what we are being shown may not be the whole truth, or that we are hearing somewhere different from the place we are seeing—manifests a persistent form of eerie absence. The trope can first be found in Henry's use of the gramophone in *Eraserhead*, Lynch's first film (Figure 6.1). At times we see the protagonist placing the needle on the grooves just long enough for a snippet of jazz to burst forth before the stylus is moved to another strain.<sup>55</sup> The music is disjointed but the audiovisual synchronicity is tight. At other times in the film, however, this correspondence is less clear, as Hainge has pointed out: the record player “seems to produce the exact same vinyl hiss and rhythmic pop no matter what the sonic content of the vinyl platter the needle reads – noises which, in some scenes, also continue long after the song itself has stopped playing”.<sup>56</sup> That the rupture involves the hissing of a record stylus is significant. Speaking of

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<sup>54</sup> van Elferen, “Dream Timbre”, 183.

<sup>55</sup> Chion notes that: “Henry is back at home and turns on the phonograph. He places the needle on different grooves of a jazz record, carving out little islands of swing music separated by silence”; *David Lynch*, 44.

<sup>56</sup> Hainge, *Noise Matters*, 182.

“the metaphysics of crackle”, Fisher finds complex nostalgia-ridden hauntological reverberations in materiality of vinyl play.<sup>57</sup> As the crackle is wrestled from the image in *Eraserhead*, it is allowed to take on a hauntological life of its own; or rather, we are asked to question whether this life was ever dependent on the physical apparatus at all. A similar situation arises at the beginning of *Inland Empire*. Opening with sound, it is a while before the hissing and crackle of vinyl is located in a black and white close up of a gramophone needle illuminated by what seems to be the beam of an old movie projector (Figure 6.2). Once located, the sounds continue over a series of fuzzy shots of a couple speaking Polish before cutting to a lady crying in front of a television playing *Rabbits*. And yet these things are not as embodied as they first seem, as they constantly point towards an absence. At the start of the film, for instance, the gramophone produces an announcement about a radio play that openly references the threshold transmedial play of the film’s origins, a play, moreover, that is never realised: “Axxon N, the longest running radio play in history, tonight, continuing in the Baltic region, a grey winter day in an old hotel”; similarly, the television screen points out of the film to Lynch’s website.

Figures 6.1 and 6.2.



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<sup>57</sup> Fisher, “The Metaphysics of Crackle”, in *Dancecult: Journal of Electronic Dance Music Culture* 5, no.2 (2013): 42-55.

It is significant that the audiovisual rupture of the gramophone trope is signalled by the materiality of music-making. We are given an unequivocal moment of synchronicity—this is where the sound is coming from—before the comfort of a unified gesture is profoundly disturbed. In both films, then, the ruptured audiovisuality of the record stylus signifies the beginning of a journey from relative stability to narrative, oneiric and emotional upheaval; the moment when events begin not only to outstrip the characters’ control, but also rational understanding. In *Eraserhead*, the protagonist takes control of the vinyl himself, before the sounds eventually break from their visual container. This creates a confusion between onscreen and offscreen music and sound— between what Henry can hear and what lies beyond his acoustic realm—and initiates a sonic shift into the realm of the eerie, as we shall see below. The vinyl-drenched opening of *Inland Empire* operates more emphatically. We do not see the agency behind the gramophone and the dislocation of sound from image happens not only immediately, but also at a fundamental, filmic level. The initial rupture is never forgotten and the film quickly spirals into an ontological confusion that is nearly impossible to untangle, a privileging of the formless that del Río interrogates in her chapter. In both examples, the audiovisual rupture marks the start of an emotional undoing and, like the visual trope of curtains and doors, represents a character teetering on the threshold of “alterity”. Here, a specific sound travels across Lynch’s works, accumulating resonances of rupture and transgression as it weaves in and out of aesthetic echoes.

By the time we get to *Interview Project*, the trope of displacement is so ingrained in Lynch’s style that we are given the sound of vinyl with no corresponding image. With a soundtrack by Lynch’s long-term collaborator Dean Hurley, together with Stoll Vaughan, and with additional

music by Eugene Wasserman and Oto Gillen, each interview contains a vocal or instrumental song; all, however, are infused with eerie sonic resonance. The segments open to the sound of a jumping record stylus, before a low-resolution image of Lynch appears producing an undoing of medium-specificity similar to that found in *Inland Empire*, mentioned above. Here, however, the poor quality image is accompanied by the sound of static, which morphs into noisy, throbbing room tone as the interviewee appears onscreen. In Jeremie's video (episode 31, August 30 2009), we hear the needle skipping with vinyl noise and a low drone before we see Jeremie sitting on a hotel bed talking above a constant room tone that heightens with the appearance of intertitles. An acoustic guitar track plays the segment out, before again fading into a strong Lynchian noise that crescendos to what might be a distorted human scream as the credits appear: "Absurda".

Introducing each segment, the vinyl operates as title music that draws out the parallels between each separate interview; yet, with its accumulated resonances of rupture and transgression from previous projects, it also emphasizes the transitory nature of each segment, the information and backstory we are not given and the gaps in our knowledge of each person's history and future. In a sense, then, it signifies the threshold moment when their histories will be taken from them, fragmented and juxtaposed with those of other people; the moment when these disparate stories are manipulated into new combinations by the website's user.

While the gramophone's recurrent trope of audiovisual fissure is relatively subtle, the most devastating ruptures occur during scenes of singing and technological mediation, in which a dramatic breakdown in synchronicity calls into question the agency behind the sound. This can initiate a viewing strategy at odds with the effacing of medium specificity noted by Friedberg and Jenkins above by revealing the film's technological materiality: as the compère of

*Mulholland Drive*'s Club Silencio reminds us, "There is no band. It is all recorded. It is all a tape. It is an illusion". This illusion is most lucidly revealed during scenes in which characters ventriloquise someone else's voice: Ben's (Dean Stockwell) theatrical lip-syncing of Roy Orbison's "In Dreams" (1963) in *Blue Velvet*, for example, or del Rio's catastrophic collapse while performing "Crying" during *Mulholland Drive* that operates as the pivot point of the film.

Both moments are arresting, but operate in different ways. In *Blue Velvet*, sound and image play against each other, yet are both located within the diegesis. The music erupts during the first close altercation between Jeffrey (Kyle MacLachlan) and Frank (Dennis Hopper), which occurs in the apartment of Frank's crime partner, Ben shortly after Frank catches Jeffrey with Dorothy. In a scene of unusual visual stasis (as all actors remain inert, listening) and significantly staged between two hanging curtains, Ben theatrically mimes to Orbison's well-known voice, his underlit face heightening the dramatic artifice of the moment. A double displacement occurs when Frank joins in, mouthing along with such emotional sincerity that it is as though the lyrics were revelatory (Figure 7). His intensely thoughtful and almost motionless consumption of the song contrasts with the flamboyance of Ben's performance, particularly when both actors are in shot for the chorus; "In Dreams I Walk with You". Just before Frank presses stop and removes the tape, Ben stops miming and lowers his microphone. Similarly, when the music restarts after the joyride, Frank asks for "candy-coloured clown" (the song's opening lyrics) to be put on the car stereo. Again, the music's materiality is in the foreground, and Frank contemplates each lyric, underlit in a way reminiscent of Ben's earlier performance. Although this scene presents a strange reading of the music, it does not present a moment of fractured audiovisuality at a

material level; there is no deceit here. And yet it does initiate a narrative upheaval; Jeffrey receives a vicious and sinister beating which prompts his decision to go to the police station.



Figure 7.

By contrast, del Rio's performance is shocking; when she falls to the floor and the song continues, we feel tricked. Until then, her performance is convincing and emotionally arresting, so when the image rips apart from the music with such force, the materiality of the film is laid bare, the fundamental pillar catastrophically collapsed. But it is more than this. Already embodied in the recorded voice is an absence; by their very nature, recordings point to a bygone time and place. Not only does the audiovisual rupture make us re-evaluate the fidelity of what we are seeing and hearing, then; it also adds a second layer of dislocation as it transpires that the voice singing to us is from the past. As in the previous examples, this double displacement initiates a fundamental shift in the film. Betty finds a blue box in her bag that matches Rita's mysterious blue key; when Rita opens it, the film's inversion begins. Diane Selwyn now looks

like Betty and her successful ex-lover, Camilla Rhodes, has turned into Rita. Like the rupture initiated by the gramophone trope, the visual wrenching of del Rio from her voice marks the start of a fundamental change in the film's trajectory.

It is deeply significant that this moment of eerie rupture is performed in front of curtains, a reiterated Lynchian symbol that, appearing within specific contexts, and in connection with eerie sounds, has become codified to serve a peculiarly ontological aesthetic, as we have seen; the mobile threshold between entities, worlds and texts. On the one hand, then, we can say that del Rio's ventriloquized performance reveals an audiovisual gash in the film's material sign system; but on the other, it is aesthetically united as the sonic absence resonates with the curtains which act as "an egress to the outside". Both sound and image, in other words, point elsewhere. Such a shocking fissure in the audiovisual fabric, based on an already absent source, is deeply eerie. To return to Fisher, in taking our attention beyond the frame they generate "a sense of alterity, a feeling that the enigma might involve forms of knowledge, subjectivity and sensation that lie beyond common experience" not only of film consumption, but also of the biological process of sensory integration.

## 2. The Eerie Acousmêtre

Related to these instances of rupture is a second form of dissonance that manifests through noises that have no obvious connection to the diegesis at all. Like broken synchronicity, these disembodied sounds can de-emphasise what we are seeing and place attention beyond the screen. Here, there is not so much an audiovisual rupture, but rather an audiovisual incompatibility, or

aporia.<sup>58</sup> Whereas in normal practice, presence, or room tone, is a unifying form of ‘silence’ used during dialogue editing to suggest a realistic ambience, Lynch’s atmospheres throb, hum, click and wheeze with rarely identifiable sounds. To a certain extent, the unique texture of these soundscapes formed as a result of Lynch’s close collaborative—and eventually solo—work on both the sound and music of his films: “there are sound effects, there are abstract sound effects”, then “music turns into sounds, and sounds turn into music”, he explains.<sup>59</sup> Elsewhere he articulates this transition even more clearly: “The borderline between sound effects and music is the most *beautiful* area”.<sup>60</sup> This borderline is explored through the compositional process, in terms of both ambient sound and music. From the outset, the collaborative process between Splet and Lynch emerged through *musique concrète* methods, a compositional approach replete with an eerie absence, which abstracts real-world noise from its source and reconfigures it as autonomous sound objects. Speaking about gathering the sound for the short film *The Grandmother*, for instance, Splet recalls that “we’d start scouring the company for things to make sounds with – you know, like crushing a plastic box, or in one case we used a pencil sharpener, and in another case we used a staple gun.”<sup>61</sup> Here, real-world sounds were abstracted into musical textures. For other projects, the process worked the other way around and traditional musical sounds were de-familiarised: the recording of Badalamenti’s music for *Lost Highway* involved the unusual placement of microphones—inside plastic piping and bottles—to disrupt

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<sup>58</sup> I have written about audiovisual aporia in “Sonic Elongation and Sonic Aporia: Soundscape Composition in Film”, in the *Oxford Handbook of Cinematic Listening*, ed. Carlo Cenciarelli (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming for 2019).

<sup>59</sup> Lynch quoted in Tom Kenny, “Cruising with David Lynch Down the ‘Lost Highway’”, in *Sound for Picture: Film Sound Through the 1990s* (Vallejo, California: MixBooks, 2000), 133.

<sup>60</sup> Lynch quoted in Chris Rodley, *Lynch on Lynch* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), 242.

<sup>61</sup> Splet quoted in “Interview: Alan Splet”, in *Cagey Films* (December 17, 1981), at <https://web.archive.org/web/20121201060512/http://www.cageyfilms.com/links/eraserhead/interviews/other-eraserhead-crew/alan-splet/> (accessed 30 August 2018).

the easy identification of the source.<sup>62</sup> These processes of defamiliarisation are significant.

According to Pierre Schaeffer, *musique concrète* produces an *acousmètre*—“a sound that one hears without seeing what causes it”—which encourages a process of “reduced listening”.<sup>63</sup> In an audiovisual setting, this process can induce great anxiety.

Reduced or indirect listening is extremely difficult to achieve in an audiovisual medium, particularly one predicated on audiovisual fidelity. In his repurposing of the term acousmatic to the audiovisual medium of film, Chion identified two distinct processes. “Embodied” sounds are first heard in clear conjunction with either a visual or plausible onscreen source before continuing when the camera moves away. Their initial “visualized” utterance locks together the audiovisuality and ensures against semantic instability, even when the images are no longer shown. When sounds are first heard from within the acousmatic space, on the other hand, and are only later synchronized with a visual source, a process of de-mythologisation—or what Chion calls “de-acousmaticization” occurs. The tension and release generated “between visualised and acousmatic provides a basis for the fundamental audiovisual notion of offscreen space”, he writes.<sup>64</sup> The compulsion to locate a source for a sound-effect is a powerful one; not only do we seek a clarity of audiovisual articulation, we also strive to substantiate—and thus embody—a film’s diegesis through the unseen spaces that lurk just beyond the frame. These spaces can be rendered concrete through editing techniques (such as shot-reverse-shot), but are often the

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<sup>62</sup> David Hughes explains further: “Lynch experimented with recording techniques, just as he had during his innovative sound work on *Eraserhead*, placing microphones inside bottles and lengths of plastic tubing to try and capture a unique sound”; *The Complete Lynch* (London: Virgin, 2001), 211.

<sup>63</sup> Schaeffer quoted in Brian Kane, *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 3.

<sup>64</sup> Chion, *Audio-Vision*, 72, 73.

domain of sound. When sounds refuse a visual connection or the process of de-acousmaticization, the result can be extremely disquieting.

The form of *concrète* created by Lynch and his collaborators embraces the ambiguity of the unresolved *acousmètre* through both its method of creation and its placement within the audiovisual whole. Many of these soundscapes are animated by loud noises that remain in a de-visualised state throughout, a sonic texture whose prolonged distance from the images confounds the traditionally-conceived “audiovisual notion of offscreen space” by drawing our attention beyond the frame altogether. The sense that something hovers just out of sight clearly animates many of Lynch’s projects: a “constant rush of boiler sounds, whirlpools, electronic organ chords, and the like” (Chion) vibrate through *Elephant Man*, while unresolved *acousmètre* dominates the soundscape of *Twin Peaks* and *Fire Walk with Me*, phases in and out of *Blue Velvet* and rises to prominence when thresholds are crossed in *Inland Empire*.<sup>65</sup> In his analysis of *Lost Highway*, Brophy paradoxically locates the film’s heavy soundscape with absence: “When we first enter Madison’s apartment, a strange aura occupies the cinema: it is the sound of nothing, the texture of silence. That humming tone that says nothing is occurring, that ringing rumble of space itself. ... Like room temperature, it is a palpable nothingness”.<sup>66</sup> This “texture of silence” not only seeps across Lynch’s cinematic worlds, but also across platforms; it hums during his DVD menus and, as we have seen, unites the cameos in *Interview Project*. In fact, although each soundscape is different, prolonged acousmatic sound is one of Lynch’s most consistent aural tropes. And unlike the punctuating moments of audiovisual rupture prompted by the gramophone

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<sup>65</sup> Chion, *David Lynch*, 38.

<sup>66</sup> Brophy, “Lost Highway: Booms, Drones and Other Dark Waves”, at <http://www.philipbrophy.com/projects/cnsncs/LostHighway.html> (accessed 30 August 2018).

or scenes of miming, these noises persist. They do not suggest a catastrophic rupture, but more a world that is, and remains, ontologically strange.

The yearning for an audiovisual resolution is activated during the gramophone scenes of *Eraserhead*, as we have seen. But the rest of the film forges an even greater sensory disturbance. Saturated by an almost continuous wash of warped industrial sound, the film is incredibly—even distractingly—noisy. Although the ambience of the noise changes as Henry moves through different spaces, the sounds remain implausible. The exterior landscape is desolate, almost ruinous, and yet reverberates with deafening whooshes and crashes, howls and shrieks that remain visually unresolved. This, combined with a peculiar absence of natural ambient sound suggests that we aren't necessarily hearing what we are seeing; or rather, we aren't seeing what we are hearing. Where are these sounds coming from? K.J Donnelly refers to the cacophony “as acousmatic sound effects: seemingly the sounds emanating from some dreadful but indistinct industrial machines somewhere in the distance.”<sup>67</sup> For him, these sounds point towards physical objects that exist in the film's world but are never revealed to us. But unless the industrial wasteland is juxtaposed with monstrous working factories and a plethora of wild animals, this seems unlikely. While Donnelly seeks the implied source of the sounds, Chion, in a reading reminiscent of Lynch's desire for a “*beautiful*” borderline between aural planes, finds an “absence of any separation between the music and its overall atmosphere”, using a particular edit where the sound of an electronic organ dissolves into the drone of a boiler to support his argument.<sup>68</sup> This slippage troubles the nature of the *acousmêtre* altogether. The mixture of

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<sup>67</sup> Donnelly, “Saw Heard: Musical Sound Design in Contemporary Cinema”, in *Film Theory and Contemporary Hollywood Movies*, ed. Warren Buckland (New York and London: Routledge, 2009), 111.

<sup>68</sup> Chion, *David Lynch*, 43-44.

implausible soundscape, a lack of realistic ambience and the creative convergence of noise and music points towards a refreshed role for sound in film. Here, soundtrack exists on the border between dramatic music and ambient sound. Real-world sounds are not used to substantiate and flesh out the film's world, either through audiovisual synchronicity or sonic ambience. Rather, they are creatively stretched into the space normally occupied by dramatic music; and here, instead of forging an illusory realism, the sounds are remediated in real time to comment on the action and on Henry's psychological state as he undergoes his strange adventure. In this sense, they clearly belong to the diegesis's aesthetic. And yet, the decision of Lynch and Splet to retain the original nature of the noises as sound-effects rather than as music troubles this unity. Writing about autonomous acousmatic noise in a way that evokes the eerie, Brian Kane has argued that the "sound object is never quite autonomous" as it generates a longing for the absent source: "one central, replicated feature of acousmatic listening appears to be that under-determination of the sonic source encourages imaginative supplementation". This, in turn, can lead to a subjective and highly imaginative form of re-visualisation, often driven by a "surplus-meaning".<sup>69</sup> *Eraserhead's* sounds-effects are clear enough that Donnelly's "imaginative supplementation" locates them in a factory just beyond sight. While this may or may not be a plausible interpretation, his process is important. The desire of audiovisual resolution encourages a "surplus-meaning" to manifest as imagined images and locations that may appear at odds with those given to us onscreen.

When discussing the sustained acousmatic sounds of *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me*, Chion evokes something that comes close to the weird: the film, he writes

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<sup>69</sup> Kane, *Sound Unseen*, 148, 9, 209.

contains a whirligig of stressed sound effects, like the reverse-playback in which words are spoken back to front preceded by their end reverberations, so that the words pop up like little bubbles, low held sounds, dizzying slides and so on. This constant sound activity, the source and nature of which often remain obscure, is one of the film's most original aspects. It creates a sense of the screen as a fragile membrane with a multitude of currents pressing on it from behind.<sup>70</sup>

Chion's imagery here is important. However, I want to suggest a different reading predicated not on a weird intrusion from beyond—a “multitude of currents” trying to get in—but rather by a movement outwards towards an eerie absence. If we think transmedially across texts and through media, we can suggest instead that sound also, and paradoxically, takes us *beyond* the “fragile membrane”. While drawing us in, it simultaneously creates a fissure in our viewing experience, asking us to split our attention between inside and out; on what is there, but also on what is not. And herein lies the eerie power of Lynch's sound. In all of the examples above, an audiovisual aporia—by which sound and image rub against each other without colliding—arises as sound constantly directs our attention elsewhere; beyond the frame or behind the technology. As we've seen, Fisher's understanding of absence is predicated on what it is that is missing: “Behind all of the manifestations of the eerie, the central enigma at its core is the problem of agency.”<sup>71</sup> What is so eerie about Lynch's soundscapes is his constant refusal to identify a sonic agency: who or what is making these noises? Where are they coming from and what do they point to? What kind of entity can leave such a troubling sonic remnant? What has just left the image? In the examples above, the eerie rarely dissipates. van Elferen has described Lynch's sonic worlds as “Nostalgic and sweet, yet empty, disturbing and ominous...”, but they are more than this.<sup>72</sup> Lynch's

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<sup>70</sup> Chion, *David Lynch*, 150.

<sup>71</sup> Fisher, *The Weird and the Eerie*, 63.

<sup>72</sup> van Elferen, “Dream Timbre”, 175.

acousmatic soundscapes continually signify away from themselves. They point towards peripheral places that lie beyond the threshold and behind the curtain; areas that cannot rationally be located in the offscreen space but bristle with an eerie “sense of alterity”.

### 3. Music Re-Voiced

The eerie does not arise simply through the liminalities of noise music—through audiovisual rupture that is left to gape, or through the lateralisation of sound— however. It is also embodied in the remediated structures, tones and textures of Lynch’s more traditionally-conceived music collaborations with Badalamenti. Like his sound design, their dramatic music and songs point elsewhere, never fully engaging with the present, or at least preventing a fully historical location for current events. During a discussion of the music for *Twin Peaks*, Mark Frost reads Badalamenti’s mixture of styles and timbres in terms of historical displacement: “If the show was a boat moving along, Angelo’s music was the river that carried it. It gave you a very specific sense of time and place that felt outside of real time and real place. It helped elevate the show into the mythological realm.”<sup>73</sup> This mythological ambiguity arises in several ways. The first is at the level of musical structure and texture. Badalamenti’s drone-based dramatic music often resists the pull of closure, refusing common tonal progressions and cadences, which results in an unusual teleological stasis that enables the fluid confluence of sound-effects and music identified by Lynch above. Unbound by tonality, its open-ended forms strain towards something else, reaching upwards and outwards as well as forwards. In his analysis of Laura Palmer’s theme, John Richardson suggests that harmonically mysterious music works together with the image to create ambiguity:

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<sup>73</sup> Frost quoted in Lynskey, ““Make it like the wind, Angelo””.

The vision of Laura fashioned is fragmentary, internally inconsistent and unfathomable. We catch glimpses but never do we get a sense that we are seeing and hearing the whole picture. The presence of excessive, and therefore parodic, gestures in the music is one way of creating instability, of implying that this version of Laura is not the whole truth and thus creating a vacuum where knowledge concerning Laura ought to be.<sup>74</sup>

It is easy to find the audiovisual eerie at work within the resisted tonal closures and thwarted melodic expectations that continually direct our attention elsewhere.

Second, and connected to this harmonic stasis, are hybrid sonic textures that combine golden Hollywood and music hall timbres with echoes of '80's dream-pop, shoe-gaze, ambient, '40s noir jazz and '50s rockabilly to resist any easily discernible historical setting. In her analysis of Badalamenti's references "to the music hall (*Eraserhead*), to classical Hollywood film music (*Blue Velvet*), or to popular music of the 1950s (*Twin Peaks*, *Wild at Heart*)", van Elferen interprets these references as creating "modes of nostalgia for times that lie eternally locked in the past".<sup>75</sup> This sonic mythologisation is most prevalent in the songs that pepper Lynch's audiovisual work, both pre-existent and original. His choice of pre-existing music continually highlights an absent past; or, in hauntological terms, a nostalgia for lost futures (Simon Reynolds, Fisher).<sup>76</sup> This is clearly seen in the skewed cultural nostalgia that emerges when Sailor Ripley (Nicholas Cage) sings his two Elvis songs ("Love Me" [1956], with the Hurricane Club's heavy metal band as the backing band and "Love Me Tender" [1956]) in *Wild at Heart* (1990) and when Dorothy Vallens (Isabella Rossellini) performs her slippery rendition of

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<sup>74</sup> Richardson, "Laura and Twin Peaks: Postmodern Parody and the Musical Reconstruction of the Absent Femme Fatale, in *The Cinema of David Lynch*, 87.

<sup>75</sup> van Elferen, "Dream Timbre", 181.

<sup>76</sup> Simon Reynolds, *Retromania: Pop Cultures Addiction to its Own Past* (London: Faber and Faber, 2011); Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (Alresford, Hants: Zero Books, 2014).

the title track, “Blue Velvet”, at the Slow Club. Returning again to Fisher, this type of troubled retro-aesthetics can be read as a postmodern melange that disrupts nostalgia and convolutes time.<sup>77</sup> Often manifesting in front of curtains at moments of narrative confusion and audiovisual rupture, these moments of retro-aesthetics suggest physical or emotional thresholds.

Lynch’s original songs promote this connective nostalgia even more clearly. Retro organs, ‘50s guitar riffs and dreamy girls’ voices spill forth through analogue microphones and record players. Yet, like his visual obsession with vintage cars and diners, Lynch’s songs expose the sinister, twisted and freaky undercurrents that lie beneath the bubble-gum innocence of teenybop driven ‘50s culture. Characterised by extremely slow, ethereal, reverb-heavy vocal lines that float above guitar-driven textures, Lynch’s collaboratively-written songs remediate and make strange the familiar qualities of 1950s and 1960s rock’n’roll. While this surrealist reconfiguration is particularly apparent in his work with Julee Cruise, it also infuses *Inland Empire*, Lynch’s first film for which he wrote most of the music alone. In “Ghost of Love” (2007), for instance, Lynch’s own voice strains and shuffles around the heartbeat pulse; he stays too long on one chord, the melodic line obsesses over too small a range and refuses the refuge of the rockabilly chorus. As we hear the song, the images distort, stretching and pulling with the music’s rhythmic lope to give a highly disorienting feel. This form of subversive musical nostalgia, which is analyzed in detail in McGrath’s chapter, is very different from van Elferen’s reading of styles that are “locked in the past”. Rather, it folds time together: this is not nostalgia but rather listening across voids; it’s embracing the disembodied textures to create a weird

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<sup>77</sup> As Chion explains with reference to *Blue Velvet*, “neither of these two worlds are quite coterminous with ours. The author succeeds in mixing the atmosphere of the ‘50s with that of today, so that we no longer know where we are.” Chion, *Lynch*, 1995, 84.

montage. But this form of audiovisual timelessness is also closely linked to the idea of the eerie. Infused with absence, nostalgia and remembrance, the music evokes the same sort of eerie as his empty corridors, unpopulated rooms and badly-lit roads.

### **The Transmedial Eerie**

The idea of listening to and across voids is significant. Lynch's soundscapes, dramatic scores and scenes of performance are unique to each project. These sonic components often manifest from multiple and sustained collaborations and operate in specific ways within the diegesis.

Nevertheless, Lynch's "signature style" materialised during his earliest projects and has continued throughout his career. To return to the idea of the assemblage auteur, it becomes clear that Lynch fully integrates the voices of his long-term collaborators—Badalamenti, Splet and Cruise amongst others—into his style, creating a sonic quality that continues to develop even when those collaborators are no longer involved. Like his visual style, this sonic quality is pervasive. Friedberg noted above that the "types of images" on various moving-image platforms are "losing their medium-based specificity": in Lynch's work, this dissolution is also signalled by an aural constancy across the mediums of television, film, music video, internet and albums which even bleeds into various sonic off-shoots, ancillary projects and fan-based variations.

Lynch's sonic style, then, is immediately apparent. But when does style give way to more tangible semantic connections between projects? While Lynch's collaboratively-conceived soundworlds produce a distinct quality that spreads across projects, his tight investment in the visual and the audio components of his projects, and his desire to leave threads hanging loosely in the spaces beyond the frame, creates flashes of conspicuous flavour at pertinent moments

across numerous projects. As we have seen, Lynch's remediated sonic textures and disembodied sounds are knitted tightly into his visual fabric. In particular, his diffuse and expansive noises signal in the same way as the recurrence of confined visual spaces, curtains, chiaroscuro lighting and fog, all of which impair or obstruct vision. Both give rise to the sense that vital information is being withheld. And yet, this unity is troubled when audiovisual synchronicity stumbles and cracks in one of the three ways outlined above. First, secure audiovisual connections are vexed. The audiovisual fractures apparent in the recurring trope of the gramophone, for instance, not only point towards an audiovisual rupture at the filmic level, but also towards the continual deferral of semiotics inherent in recording media. The scenes of singing and miming, where image and sound are torn apart entirely, enact this "*failure of presence*" even more emphatically. Second, the defamiliarizing strategies of *musique concrète* and the acousmatic noises that refuse de-mythologisation continually emphasise the "*failure of absence*". And third, the fusion of styles and textures in the dramatic music and diegetic songs destabilises common sonic vocabularies, folding together different textures in a way that highlights the eerie absence of bygone eras and cultures. It is in these distinct *audiovisual* moments that more substantial links between discrete projects can arise.

Yet, what makes these audiovisual disjunctions a case of transmedial flow rather than simply a continuity of style? The key here lies in the destination of the sounds. If we return to Jenkins' identification of transmedia arising through the augmentation of certain aspects of a text to form "a point of entry into a different story or a portal into exploring another aspect of the world," it is clear to see that, in much of Lynch's work, the focus lies less on the point of entry, and rather on the point of exit as attention is continually drawn to the edge of the

screen.<sup>78</sup> In sonic terms, the disembodied and de-visualised sounds encourage us to listen beyond what is shown, a process that decentres the work by emphasising the eerie absent. This spread outwards initiates a fundamental transgression of cinematic convention, whereby attention is drawn into the frame both visually and aurally, and acousmatic sound serves primarily to reinforce the validity of the filmed world. In Lynch's worlds, sound and music do just the opposite. They press beyond the frame but rarely become visually substantiated: "Sometimes sound even overplays the visual". In this sense, the ontological strangeness of Lynch's worlds persist, as Fisher reminds us: "once the questions and enigmas are resolved, the eerie immediately dissipates."<sup>79</sup> And yet, these moments of audiovisual rupture are striking and when they recur in other projects—usually at moments of similar emotional upheaval—an immediate aesthetic thrum is generated that crosses diegetic borders. As the disembodied sounds of Lynch's film, TV and internet worlds press outwards, in other words, they reach for each other. If we follow these sonic portals, connections and reverberations between projects, it becomes clear that Lynch's incorporeal soundscapes and remastered songs suggest more than a strong sense of style: rather, they are intertextual echoes and transmedial extensions that flow into the eerie void before reappearing in other projects reinvested with accumulated aesthetic significance. Geoffrey Long reminds us that transmedia stories should include "passing references to external people, places, or events" that can be picked up as "potential migratory cues" for further exploration.<sup>80</sup> In Lynch's work, these migratory cues can be clearly defined (as they are in the transmedial spread of *Twin Peaks*), but they can also be abstract, aesthetic,

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<sup>78</sup> Jenkins, "The Aesthetics of Transmedia".

<sup>79</sup> Fisher, *The Weird and the Eerie*, 62.

<sup>80</sup> Long, *Transmedia Storytelling: Business, Aesthetics, and Production at the Jim Henson Company* (PhD Thesis: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Department of Comparative Media Studies, 2007), 60.

expansive; based not on places or events or characters, but on audiovisual textures, gaps and contradictions.

With this in mind, we can attempt to articulate a form of transmedial deconstruction. The eerie in Lynch's soundworlds results in a paradox: the sounds strain beyond the frame, never succumbing to a state of de-acousmaticisation. And yet this same eerie state arises in numerous films.

Returning to the metaphor of the hyperlink, we can see that it is a useful starting point to understanding Lynch's cross-media references. Yet while hyperlinks may not always take us somewhere that makes sense, they do take us somewhere concrete. The audiovisual eerie, on the other hand, takes us to a nebulous aural space whose re-visualisation requires our own individual process of "imaginative supplementation". Because the obscurity of Lynch's texts already abound with surplus and slippery meanings, and because his *concrète* sounds often lack a specificity, any attempt to (re)fabricate a source leads to further conundrum. It is this process that generates the "sense of alterity"; a "sensation that lie[s] beyond common experience".

Significantly, though, these moments recur across texts at similar moments of narrative and emotional upheaval. These pockets of audiovisual dissonance can be read as portals that link together projects in terms of affect, emotion and anxiety. Lynch's form of transmedia, then, is based not on augmentation but by discontinuity, ambiguity and repetition. It requires an unstable relationship between sound and image, or a shudder in the audiovisual fabric, to fully manifest; either through disembodied sound, ruptured or de-synchronised noise or through remediated textures replete with hauntological absence and a longing for times past.

It is immediately clear that Lynch's cross-media echoes are different to the ideas that underpin Jenkins' formative understanding of a transmedia story as that which "unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole". Beyond the *Twin Peaks* group of films and artefacts, Lynch rarely indulges in sequels, spinoffs, novels, comics that extend fictional worlds; or the pre-screening artefacts that preceded films such as *The Blair Witch Project* to extend and blend real and fictional worlds. Lynch's work operates in a less tangible way, with connections arising through a shared aesthetic condition rather than specific narrative occurrences or characters. This condition is apparent at both a physical level—through the interaction of sound with image—and at the level of affect—through the continual deferral of resolution.

While Lynch and his team have played with traditional forms of transmedial storytelling, then, they have also embraced more open-ended, eerie types of connections that lie beyond clear narrative gap-filling. van Elferen goes some way towards this idea:

In this sense it is not surprising that the leitmotifs in Lynch's films are not tied to single characters or situations; they are designed to haunt diegetic, meta-diegetic, and extra-diegetic spaces alike, thereby loosening the boundaries between them. His soundtracks traverse the boundaries between these levels of narration, perception, and experience, and they can most accurately be described as *trans-diegetic*.<sup>81</sup>

While I agree with her reading, I want to end by going one step further to think beyond and between the boundaries of each cinematic representation to become transmedial. In fact, when taken together, the three layers of aurality that drive these worlds—room tone, Badalalemti's

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<sup>81</sup> Isabella van Elferen, "Dream Timbre: Notes on Lynchian Sound Design, in *Music, Sound and Filmmakers*, p.184. Italics hers. pp.175-188.

composed score, and covers or lip-syncs of pre-existent songs—confute the notion of the diegetic altogether, and offer instead an extended form of transmedial world-undoing. This refreshed form of transmedia, dominated by what remains unseen and unsaid, repositions attention from visual modes of storytelling to *audiovisual* ones.