

Transcendental Meditation and the creation of soundscapes for storytelling in the work of David

Lynch

by

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Abstract:

The films of David Lynch are unique: unusual, strange and otherworldly. It is no secret that Transcendental Meditation is a huge part of Lynch's life; he has stated that Transcendental Meditation has been key to his work and promoting the establishment of the David Lynch Foundation. Despite this factor, scholars largely ignore it. In this thesis, I identify and analyse the visual and sound elements in Lynch's films and television work that includes *Eraserhead* and *Mulholland Drive*. Fundamental to this investigation, I have used the concept of Transcendental Meditation, Hinduism and noise as a framework to examine these films. I will identify specific techniques and methods previously unnoticed before in Lynch's work and argue that the symbolism and mythology of Transcendental Meditation creates specific atmospheric environments through sounds. This thesis aims to provide an insightful investigation on how Lynch's use of TM helps create a specific way of using sound to tell his stories. This dissertation fills a gap in the scholarship on the films of David Lynch by providing a new perspective on his soundscapes. Each chapter that addresses a specific film includes a close analysis of the film's narrative and stylistic elements. The focus of the study is an examination of how Lynch uses Hindu philosophy as an instrument.

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Introduction

Films are 50 percent visual and 50 percent sound. Sometimes sound even overplays the visual. (Lynch in www.lynchnet...monster)

In this thesis, I discuss the work of director David Lynch, whose films privilege the mode of sound over the image. Lynch's filmmaking career began with painting. While attending the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Lynch was working on a painting of a woman in a garden when he heard the sound of wind blowing. Suddenly, the painting started to move. This peculiar experience singlehandedly shaped Lynch's belief that cinema is a moving painting. Lynch said in the documentary (*Making Waves: The Art of Cinematic Sound* 2019), "People always talk about the look of a film, they don't talk so much about the sound of a film, but it's equally important. Sometimes more important." Over his career Lynch has pushed cinematic soundscapes to experimental extremes generating his own cinematic language established through his sound design. Lynch's style is a unique brand of madness however it is immediately recognisable. He is so distinct that his work has its own generic term used by critics, students and academics alike *Lynchian*. The key is the way in which he has developed a set of themes and stylistic elements to define his filmmaking.

According to French film theorist and composer Michel Chion, "the cinema is a vococentric or, more precisely, a verbocentric phenomenon" (1994, p.5). Thus, the cinema almost always privileges the voice, over other sounds. In conventional Hollywood dialogue does not normally compete with the music or background noise. Sound effects are usually less important than speech, as they supply an overall sense of a realistic environment. Music is also usually subordinate to dialogue, entering during pauses in conversation or in passages without dialogue. Background music is used to add emotion and rhythm to a film. Usually not meant to be noticeable, providing a tone or an emotional attitude. In addition, background music often foreshadows a change in mood.

However, Lynch's films challenge the traditional relationship of sight and sound, where the former's superiority is considered indispensable. Lynch is well known for his dreamy soundscapes and often preferring ambient noise or low reverberations over traditional orchestration. Lynch's soundscapes support his dream worlds. Thus, providing the backdrop for his extraordinary narratives. Michel Chion goes as far as to argue that "Lynch can be said to have renewed the cinema by way of sound" (2006, p. 42). For instance, Lynch's first feature film *Eraserhead*, with its droning electricity generators and estranged industrial noises, acted as the sound template to which his later films would both return to and expand out from. His collaborations with the revolutionary sound designer Alan Splet offered at times unnerving results with the manipulation of organic sounds to give across the feeling of an ominous over-powering presence. His consistent use of alienating industrial ambient sounds have made them become a Lynchian trademark, particularly in his films prior to teaming up with Angelo Badalamenti to produce numerous dark and brooding soundtracks. This uneasy feeling is primarily created through his intentionally understated scores of subtle ambient sound, which both unconsciously draws us into his films, as well as giving them an atmospheric aural depth.

According to Van Elferen, the "Lynchian sound design enables an overlap of diegetic, extra-diegetic, and meta-diegetic sound and music" (2012, p.179). Thus, determining what is music and what is environmental sound is at times impossible and constructs a feeling of an unreal reality. Van Elferen (2012, p.179) continues to say that this contributes to the overlapping of realities in each one of his films. Therefore, Lynch's soundscapes reinforce and emphasize the dreamlike nature of each narrative, thereby enhancing the abstract imagery. More specifically it is the way he combines each sound element to create his unique narratives. Lynch's use of sound, hints at what exists beyond the image.

In addition to his soundscapes, the worlds of his films often divide into light and dark, often, Lynch's characters will be inherently dualistic, and their narrative arcs revolve around confronting their divided natures. Lynch's work derives from the paradox between good and evil inherent in his

characters. Lynch's concern with duality often coincides with his preoccupation with the division between reality and fantasy, itself a dichotomy. Lynch creates cinematic universes that blur the boundaries between multiple realities. Central to his narratives are dreams this is how Lynch presents alternate realities and distorted temporalities.

His imagery is captivating and powerful despite its abstract mysterious meaning. However, it is sound which is central in his surreal narratives; his soundscapes of altered frequencies and low-end drone-like sounds are combined with dreams and the subconscious, which are not completely understood within the context of the narrative, often finding themselves contrasting reality with surreal moments. The source of these strange sounds is mostly off-screen, suggesting that there is more to the fictional world than what is on the screen thereby luring the audience's attention to what is beyond the frame.

Lynch is a long-time practitioner of, and vocal advocate for, Transcendental Meditation (TM), "which derives from the Vedic texts of India, first written down around 5000 years ago" (Beckley, 2014, p. 6). The ancient Vedic is the science of consciousness in Hinduism. Beckley (2014, pp. 14-15), explains, in its simplest form TM uses a mantra or sound as using a word with meaning would keep the mind on the surface and not allow it to go beyond and transcend. In TM the mantra or sound has a resonance with its source in the primordial hum Om or Aum close to the silent, blissful level of the mind which gives it a tendency to fade in that direction. This attracts and charms the mind thus it settles towards silence. The goal of TM is to achieve a state of inner wakefulness with no object of thought or perception, just pure consciousness aware of its own unbounded nature. The three components of any experience create wakefulness: the relationship of observer or knower; the process of observation or knowing and the observed or known.

In Lynch's book *Catching the Big Fish: Meditation, Consciousness, and Creativity* (2016), he discloses how TM has been vital to his creativity and formation of his work. This has formed the basis for this investigation. Lynch believes that there is more than one universe or reality he implies that there must be something interconnecting them. His work deals with something in between, that place

that is not quite reality. He reminds us that we can never be sure of anything and that so-called dreams are not worth any less than the everyday reality therefore Lynch suggests the world we live in may not be our true reality.

Furthermore, the basic elements of TM and other Hindu philosophies are crucial to Lynch's work such as the concept of Maya, Jayaram V (2018) explains the meaning of Maya as an illusion, magic, trickery, deceit or the deluding power of nature. In a philosophical sense, it refers to illusion or unreality, the illusion of physical and mental reality that we operate under. The world is an illusion, a play of the supreme consciousness of God. Hinduism considers the world to be false or unreal not in a physical sense but in an eternal and absolute sense. The world is an illusion not because it does not exist, but because it is not what it appears to be all the time. The influence of Hinduism is not limited to these notions I identify other concepts in the case studies where I go into more detail.

Purpose of study

There have been many academic studies written on Lynch's audio-visual work, together with attempts to deconstruct his complex narratives. However, none of these studies has approached his work from a TM point of view. Consequently, Lynch's work cannot be understood or deconstructed within the constraints of traditional film theory and analysis. In the absence of significant scholarship on this topic, I propose a new perspective into thinking about Lynch's use of sound.

Additionally, I argue Lynch's fascination with duality in his work is a portrayal of the core belief in Hinduism. I will exhibit, that sound and image unveil a gateway to Lynch's work that can construct new ways of understanding his extraordinary worlds. I also investigate the impact of dreams and discuss the numerous dream components in Lynch's work. These include the use of dreaming as a narrative structuring device and the inclusion of scenes in which characters experience a dream.

Throughout this thesis the topic of multiple co-existing realities will be explored, either by sound and or image. Although reference is made to various works of Lynch, I will be focusing primarily on two

of his major film projects, *Eraserhead* (1977), and *Mulholland Drive* (2001). Because both films use the theatre stage to great affect which functions as a visual metaphor to the characters and audience to unveil the illusion of the films reality. In addition, Both films have two mysterious characters which may symbolise Shiva and Kali.

Research Questions

In order to analyse the sound elements used by Lynch, the following research questions are posited:

1. How does Transcendental Meditation (Hinduism) inform Lynch's narratives?
2. What does Lynch's soundscapes convey?

The questions raised in this thesis explore the impact of the artistic choices made by filmmaker David Lynch. More importantly, this thesis aims to investigate, identify and offer an interpretation of the meaning behind some of his most iconic work through his soundscapes. I argue that the purpose of Lynch's stylistic choices is to suggest that there is more beneath the surface to the world and ourselves. If we listen closely to the sounds of the universe, we will hear the messages of the world. I identify specific techniques and methods previously unnoticed before in Lynch's work and argue that the symbolism and mythology of TM creates specific atmospheric environments through sounds. This thesis presents a series of chapters which consider separate concepts and ideas about the selected films which, although appearing freestanding, come together in the final chapter.

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

Introduction

Before examining each study, it is important to give an understanding of the theories that will be applied due to their complexities and the shared ideas with both films. Therefore, the theoretical framework for this thesis provides an overview of key concepts from Hinduism found in Lynch's work and highlights the relevance by providing examples to establish connections.

Shiva

According to David Frawley (2018), Shiva the Hindu God is a paradoxical figure that suggests a reality beyond our reach. Shiva is the embodiment of what is hidden, what is not what it appears to be, but reflects a vast and imperious power and motivation behind all that we see. Shiva reflects the great mystery and cosmic power in which we all live. Shiva or (Siva) is a complex character, who is multi-dimensional and known by many names. Frawley (2018), further explains Shiva is the deity of paradox. He stands above all dualities. He is beyond good and evil. He is the being of cosmic consciousness far beyond the constraints of any creaturely mind and its compulsions. Shiva helps us embrace both sides of all dualities so that we can move beyond all dualities to the essence of oneness which is the deepest awareness. Shiva is the very death of death. He carries all time and existence.

It is important to note the different forms Shiva is known by as these different forms can be seen across Lynch's work. For instance, Frawley (2018) notes that he is Nataraja, the great lord of the cosmic dance, he consumes the entire universe in the all-pervasive cosmic fire. This form of Shiva can be associated with *Twin Peaks*, such as Mike's poem: "Through the darkness of future past, the magician longs to see, one chance out between two worlds, fire walk with me!" or even The Man from Another Place who dances in the red room. Dance is an important art form in India, and Shiva is believed to be the master of it. He is often called the Lord of Dance. The rhythm of dance is a metaphor for the balance in the universe which Shiva is believed to hold so masterfully. (BBC -

Religions - Hinduism: Shiva. 2009). Frawley (2018), also explains that he is Chandrashekhara who holds the crescent Moon on his head as an ornament and has the power to control the mind. Arguably this form of Shiva can be linked to *Eraserhead*, The Man in the Planet who lives on moon played by Jack Fisk. According to Mohanji ('The Silence Of Shiva', 2018), Shiva is a state. The state of perfect detachment, represented by his eternal silence. Yogis have given various attributes to Shiva as being fond of cremation grounds, wearing ash on the body, carrying a trident, drum, so on and so forth. These are all connected to dissolution. Ash of the funeral pyre is a reminder that when a person sees the truth beyond his ego identification, he is pure ash. Shiva wears that ash on his body as a reminder that our existence eventually returns to dissolution. This depiction can be seen in *Mulholland Drive* as The Bum (Bonnie Aarons).

Shiva, who is one of the three supreme Gods, found in Hindu triumvirate. The three-pronged trident represents the three functions of the Hindu triumvirate. He is known as the destroyer while the other Gods are the creator (Brahma) and the preserver (Vishnu.) While the other Gods are responsible for the creation and perseverance of the earth, Shiva must destroy it in order to recreate it. Hindus believe his powers of destruction and recreation are used to destroy the illusions (Maya) and imperfections of this world, paving the way for beneficial change. According to Hindu belief, this destruction is not arbitrary, but constructive. Shiva is therefore seen as the source of both good and evil and is regarded as the one who combines many contradictory elements.

Kali

Kali the Goddess of time and eternity she embodies shakti feminine energy, creativity and fertility and is an incarnation of Parvati, wife of the great Hindu God Shiva. In Hinduism Blue is a representation of a God or Goddess, Kali is most often depicted as blue in Indian art. Her forms are as diverse and paradoxical as those of Shiva. It is believed Kali is a Goddess of death as she brings death of the ego as the illusory self-centered view of reality. Like Shiva the destroyer they are the destroyers of unreality. It can be debated that The Lady in the Radiator (Laurel Near), in *Eraserhead* and The Blue

Haired Lady (Cori Glazer), in *Mulholland Drive* are Lynch's visual representation of the Hindu Goddess Kali.

Maya

Another fundamental concept in Hinduism is Maya, the veil of illusion that surrounds us. According to Jayaram V (2018), the concept of Maya refers to illusion or unreality, the illusion of physical and mental reality that we operate under. The world is an illusion, a play of the supreme consciousness of God. The world is an illusion however this is not because the world does not exist, it is because it is not what it appears to be just like in a dream, that can be different things to different people according to their perception of things and states of mind. Because of Maya, we remain under a spell. Maya conceals the truths of existence from the world creating an alternative reality. Maya is also described in the Hindu as the play Lila of God enacted through his creative energy force (*shakti*). Maya-Lila is the concept that creation is continuous, ceaseless cycles of creation and destruction. In which there are multiple realities which are transformable, with blurred definitions between divine play and non-play. This is like a dream which is seemingly looking real however it is inherently unreal.

Maharishi Vedic Science

In Maharishi Vedic Science, waking state consciousness is just one of seven states of consciousness. Maharishi Vedic Science goes on to identify a fourth state of consciousness, beyond the three states of waking, dreaming, and sleeping, called Transcendental Consciousness. Also referred to as pure consciousness, pure awareness, pure intelligence, or self-referral consciousness, Transcendental Consciousness is the state of unbounded awareness. In addition, there are still further states of consciousness that the individual can experience. In the fourth state of consciousness the individual experiences a sense of expanded awareness, where the self becomes infinite, unbounded; called the Self it is also referred to as the cosmic self or Atma in Vedic terminology. In Transcendental Consciousness, subject and object are both aspects of consciousness. Through the process of transcending, the mind settles down, until it becomes consciousness by itself. At this level, subject

and object are both aspects of self-referral consciousness. There is no separation. This is why the term self-referral consciousness aptly describes this state. It is where consciousness refers only to itself.

Consequently, there are three values of consciousness within one field of consciousness. Maharishi describes this three-in-one structure of subject or knower (Rishi), the object or known (Chandas) and the process of knowing (Devata), are values of consciousness within one wholeness (Samhita). These three principles of Rishi, Devata, and Chhandas together constitute the three-in-one structure (Samhita of Rishi, Devata, and Chhandas) of pure knowledge. As Maharishi states:

In its 'self-referral' state, or transcendental state, consciousness knows itself alone; as such, it is the knower of itself. By being the knower of itself, it is also the object of knowledge and the process of knowing. Thus, in its self-referral state, consciousness is the unified state of knower, knowing, and known. In the Vedic language this 'three-in-one' structure of consciousness is called Samhita of Rishi, Devata, Chhandas—Samhita (unity) of Rishi (knower), Devata (dynamism of the process of knowing), and Chhandas (the known) (1995, p. 42)

At this level, the knower, knowing itself, is simultaneously the subject, object and process of knowing. Furthermore, in the dynamic reverberation of one to three, three to one, an infinite frequency vibration within consciousness. Subsequently, the self-referral dynamics of consciousness give rise to unmanifest sound frequencies.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

With sounds in Lynch's work, we are constantly within something
Michel Chion (2006, p. 42).

Introduction

The literature in this review is important to the understanding of Lynch's sound design, duality and Hinduism. I examine existing literature which discusses David Lynch's sound design focusing mostly on his use of noise. Through this review I establish common themes found throughout Lynch's audio-visual work. Furthermore, the literature review is intended to highlight where gaps exist in the literature, and to expose areas that assist in Hinduism within Lynch's soundscape. Nevertheless, it is imperative that previous academic studies are critically evaluated. This raises the following questions which need to be explored. How are his films interpreted? Are there any links between theorists' assessment of sound, noise and Hinduism? These academic film studies will provide a starting point for my investigation.

Michel Chion (2006, p. 42), a leading theorist in sound studies, argues that Lynch's particular use of sound unexpectedly creates continuity from the discontinuities in sound. The spectator is "held" by the film and enclosed within its temporality: simultaneously wrapped within the folds of the filmic soundscape. Therefore, this facilitates unique areas for analysis.

In Isabella Van Elferen's essay *Dream Timbre: Notes on Lynchian Sound Design* from the book *Music, Sound, and Filmmakers*, (2012), she describes Lynch's soundtracks as being "conceived as thick textures in which acoustic sounds are mixed into the background and made fuzzy by an overlay of white noise... It travels through all the diegetic, extra-diegetic, and meta-diegetic timespaces of his films." Van Elferen refers to this noise as "room tone" and advocates that this noise becomes a presence, it has neither a cause nor an illustrative character, it no longer has a clearly recognizable origin, instead, it becomes a prime animator. For Allister Mactaggart sound affects the spectator's unconscious awareness:

Sound “works” throughout Lynch’s films [by] providing a continual “performative twisting” with which to produce an eerie effect and affect for the spectator... [U]nlike most films where soundtracks are added to the images later, Lynch’s films incorporate sounds throughout and within the images, and are not separated out for post-production. This provides a strong sense of how sounds can bypass rational, cognitive “understanding” of the narrative. Sounds travel and affect indirectly, working on the body and psyche in ways which disrupt the narrative flow (2010, p. 128)

Moreover, sound immerses the spectator in Lynch’s fictional worlds to the point where the spectator cannot escape its machinations. Yet Mactaggart recognises that sound “disrupts the narrative flow.” He thus hints at the distinction effects generated by Lynch’s anti-realistic sound and noise.

Although discussions have taken place around the use of noise in Lynch’s work, few have given an in-depth investigation. However, Liz Greene, another key theorist on Lynch is the exception. She recognises the importance noise has within the soundscape and emphasises that there is rarely any detailed analysis of what this noise is and what it might mean. Therefore, Greene investigates “what is meant when academics and critics refer to this work in terms of noise” (2016). In her essay *Noise: Blurring the Boundaries of the Soundtrack in The Palgrave Handbook of Sound Design and Music in Screen Media*, Greene proposes:

In Splet and Lynch’s work, the noise or sound design is meant to convey meaning and mood within the film. The greatest strength in this application of noise lies in the ambiguity of this type of sound and in how this message is in turn read by audiences. If the audience does not believe that the director is trying to get them to feel something at a particular point in a film—that is, becoming aware of an attempt to over-manipulate them—they are more likely to trust the film’s integrity. A piece of sound design that sounds like noise but acts like music—having an emotional impact—can carry an audience along without them being aware of it. (2016)

According to Greene, ‘the ambiguity of this type of sound’ has the same emotional impact as music and is a more subtle way to manipulate the audience. She argues that the audience are unaware of Lynch’s intention; he persuades them to feel something at a particular point in his films. Noise used in

this context has the ability to create a stronger emotional bond between the audience and narrative due to noises ability to trigger hidden emotional responses that music may fail to do.

In Philip Halsall's conclusion section of his (2002) online article *The Films of David Lynch 50 Percent Sound*, Halsall states that Lynch, manipulates sound in such a way that it is used as an unseen character who creates confusion as much as they elucidate the plot which provides a counter-narrative. Halsall agrees with Greene in that Lynch's use of noises create a musical score, whereby all the sounds are merged into one. However, they differ on how the noise is read by the audience. Halsall asserts, "not only does Lynch's use of noises create a musical score, but it also forms an audio narrative for the viewer, a narrative that tells us the story from a different viewpoint". Thus, the blurring of sound effects and score, intensifies the narrative through its atmospheric properties. Therefore, creating an increased audio-visual experience for the audience. For Halsall noise challenges the viewer by shifting the audience's focus between what they are watching and hearing.

Similarly, to Halsall, Frances Morgan argues Lynch takes an abstract approach to noise and sound, often using noise "on its own and interwoven with music to create atmospheres". She declares that the use of music is 'distinctive to the point of being adjectival' in terms of how 'music and sound design are inextricably linked' (2011).

One of Lynch's major sound effects is the rhythmical droning sound. Chion (2006, p. 27) notes, in addition to noise, droning is present from the outset, establishing a dimension without which the film might not even have been possible. Chion provides the following example, in *Twin Peaks fire walk with me* the rhythmical droning of the ceiling fan at the Palmer house. It is one of those machine sounds with an implacable regularity which are omnipresent in Lynch's work. Their meaning is neither erotic nor sexual as such, nor can they be reduced to some primary function. They are life itself, vital power, absurd and ever-present.

In *Lynch on Lynch*, Chris Rodley (2005, p. 73) observes that the noise of electricity has a particular kind presence which at times becomes linked with the inexplicable. Referring to *Twin Peaks* in a conversation with Lynch, Rodley puts forth the idea that electricity becomes very sinister via the association with Killer Bob. To which Lynch replies, “Yes, well something strange is happening when Bob is around. There are, maybe, some worlds coming together...” (2005, p. 74). Subsequently, Lynch is indicating that there exists more than one world. Thus, to reach the other electricity is needed.

Andreas Halskov’s (2015) in his video essay *noise and interference in Lynch’s films*, states that Lynch uses noise as a stylistic device, recurring motif and general theme. Halskov argues that the many instances of technological noise in Lynch’s films (e.g. *Eraserhead*, *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*, *Lost Highway* and *Inland Empire*) function as more than just a cool aesthetic. These motifs, in fact, illustrate a common theme in the works of David Lynch: the constant battle between the conscious and the unconscious world as if they were two frequencies on the same radio. *Eraserhead* introduces the audience to different alternate realities or impressions. The boundaries between real life, fantasy and nightmare are fluid and establishes uncertainty.

Another noticeable use of sound is Lynch’s dialogues. Chion (2006, p. 182) notes even though Lynch’s dialogues may be lacking, i.e very little is spoken they exist and resonate in a kind of void. Time and silence grow between these words spoken by the characters in Lynch’s work. Chion describes the sentences spoken in Lynch’s films as being surrounded by emptiness, these words influence and reduce to silence all that surrounds them.

For Halsall’s, although Lynch's destabilisation of dialogue, prolonged use of silence and over-exaggerated background noises appear to be out of context within Lynch’s films they are an integral part of the visual added dimension, that reinforces the on-screen imagery. He proclaims:

In his films Lynch has experimented and subverted dialogue in order to create a sonic

dimension that stretches the viewer's senses further. In the richly woven audio tapestry of Lynch's films a voice can be projected to the forefront of the scene leaving the observer in no doubt as to how significant or relevant that piece of dialogue is. Dialogue lends itself heavily to the narration of Lynch's films... (2002)

For Halsall dialogue is an extremely important factor in Lynch's films and has been used in various ways to great effect. A character's speech, voice and delivery create a new dimension for the audience and helps to create diverse textures and moods that cannot be portrayed as effectively with visual methods. Chris Rodley, (2005, pp. 72-73) shares the same view as Chion and Halsall. He states, for Lynch he undermines the narrative importance of dialogue through the insertion of long silences that create the “sonic discomfort”.

As a child Lynch was aware that “undeneath the surface there is another world, and still different worlds as you dig deeper” (2005, p. 8). Hinduism has given Lynch the opportunity to explore this fascination with “a world within a world”. Lynch (2013, p. xvi) expressed his thoughts about the world as being an uncertain place that masks important universal realities, enunciated for him by Hindu religion. Martha Nochimson (2013, p. 13) emphasises in her book Hindu religion inspires Lynch’s creativity and offers him new ways to speak about multiple levels of reality in his films. Thus, providing Lynch’s paradigm of a cosmic “beyondness” engaging in the interplay between boundaries and boundlessness.

Greg Olson shares the same view as Nochimson, in his book *David Lynch Beautiful Dark*. Olson (2008, p. 560) proclaims since the early 1970s, Lynch became fascinated by Paramahansa Yogananda’s book *The Autobiography of a Yogi*, which spoke of the world we occupy as an illusion (Maya) “the cosmic motion picture”. Olson (2008, p. 563) asserts, since then, Lynch has embraced this belief which has manifested, the region of coexistent realities in his work.

Jonathan Goodwin agrees with Olson and Nochimson, as he too identifies Lynch’s attraction and use of multiple worlds coexisting in each one of Lynch’s films. Goodwin (2014) believes Lynch’s films

confront the audience with separate realities. These separations typically correspond to conventional symbolic interpretation, such as higher worlds of good and lower worlds of evil.

Furthermore, Simon Riches (2011) concurs with Lynch's duality approach. Riches emphasises the theme of dreaming in *Twin Peaks*, and *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*, cross the boundaries of the natural world in order to embrace otherworldly themes, what might be thought of as a "dream reality." Consequently, this Lynchian distortion of the natural world tends to home in on a special, seemingly inaccessible location: a dream space (or "another place")

Ronie Parciack reinforces the theory of Lynch employing Hinduism, in her essay *The World as Illusion: Rediscovering Mulholland Dr. and Lost Highway through Indian Philosophy*. She claims Lynch's films are best interpreted through the philosophical schools of Hinduism. Parciack applies this to her analysis of *Lost Highway* and *Mulholland Drive*, arguing that Lynch is obsessed with the "riddle of identity". Parciack expresses her view that "... Both films present protagonists whose identity is blurred or fused with other figures and raise questions concerning the Lynchian cinematic figure. Who is he or she?" (2011, pp. 78-79).

Isabella van Elferen (2012) assents with the "riddle of identity she believes the returning trope of the Doppelgänger, of doubling and mirroring, is a manifestation of the uncanny that reflects another main characteristic of the Freudian uncanny: that of the self becoming "duplicated, divided and interchanged." Isabella van Elferen (2012, p. 175), also highlights the audio-visual components in Lynch's work construct the surreal universes of nonlinear narratives and overlapping realities of his dreamscapes, and the combination is typically evaluated as extremely disconcerting.

According to Chris Rodley (2005, p. x) in Lynch's universe, worlds both real and imagined collide. Rodley believes this is partly due a product of a cross-generic approach, perceived by the audience as the absence of any rules or conventions that might provide comfort and crucially orientation. He

further establishes the psychological expression was in the metaphor of the double, where the threat is perceived as a replica of the self, all the more terrifying because its otherness is apparently the same.

Conclusion

The literature examined in this review distinguishes that Lynch presents his own distinct philosophical account of reality, which is reflected in both the narrative and soundtrack. Each scholar echoes the other in establishing the importance of noise in Lynch's work and highlights the need for a more detailed investigation of what this noise is and what it might mean. Noise used in a Lynch film has the ability to encourage a critical perceptual mode in engaging with his fictional worlds triggering what can be argued as a primal response. Additionally, noise forms an audio narrative for the audience, which provides another level to the narrative. Lynch blurs the boundaries between sound design and score, as the soundtrack goes beyond sound effects and music. Through sound Lynch is able to construct meaning beyond the images, which run parallel to the narrative, this opens up new perspectives for the audience to absorb, providing a richer and fuller cinematic experience. Each analysis proposes ways that noise can be read in Lynch's cinematic work and highlights the need for further investigation. Therefore, it is important to explore theories around noise and what it may signify. It is evident that in order to truly discern what this noise is and what it may signify, therefore new approaches into sound studies must be utilized.

In addition, it is evident from these scholars that Lynch has merged theories from Hinduism into his films. Hinduism has influenced Lynch's cinematic universes providing him ways to depict multiple realities in his films. Although they provide a thorough study into dualism, the division of the world into opposites, good and evil, there is a lack of investigation into how this applies to Lynch's soundscape. The majority of academic research thus far tends to analyse his films within the confines of film theory thereby limiting their understanding and opportunity to broaden the scope of film studies. Consequently, new approaches are needed to produce better understanding and formulate new meaning, in the study of Lynch as well as in film studies as a whole. In the absence of significant

scholarship on this topic I would like to propose that other perspective could be provided into thinking about the use of sound.

The traditions of Transcendental Meditation, which Lynch has practiced for almost 40 years, can be helpful for understanding the mind/body connection that is so essential to Lynch's worldview. The core truth of Hindu philosophy deals with our everyday world as an illusion Maya of duality and multiplicity from which we need to wake up in order to perceive the one, undifferentiated absolute reality (Brahman). Therefore, the theoretical framework for this thesis combines previous academic studies in which I expand upon and apply further theories based on Hinduism, noise and film sound theory to structure my own framework in order to examine Lynch's soundscape.

Chapter Three: Listen to the sounds

Sound is almost like a drug. It's so pure that when it goes in your ears, it instantly does something to you (Lynch).

Introduction

David Lynch's films challenge the spectators' experience and 'like a drug' alerts, changes and propels them to another reality and/or self-realisation. Therefore, to understand Lynch's uniqueness as a filmmaker, his films must be approached differently to traditional film analysis which fails to consider this, since his work is distinctive. What has become to be known as *Lynchian* emerged from Lynch's first feature film *Eraserhead*. What Lynch calls his "most spiritual film" (2016, p. 33). The narrative focuses on the central character Henry Spencer (Jack Nance) who feels trapped and longs to escape his industrial environment, his marriage to Mary X, and his newly born mutant baby.

Film has the unique ability to confront its audience with another version or representation of reality thereby dragging the viewer into the individual world it offers. Many different elements come together in order to give the filmic medium these unique abilities. *Eraserhead* is the cinema of extreme where darkness intensifies and strangeness morphs into obscurity. *Eraserhead* lays the foundation for these overarching themes that were largely explored in his subsequent films. The heightened noises, the hum of electricity and wind sounds inhabit the cinematic space of Lynch's universe where his characters live thereby creating atmospheres and suggesting something significant is occurring. Lynch often uses noise to complement and expand upon his visuals. Noise in his films takes the form of dense layers of treated ambient sound as well as harsh, loud, and overlapping sonic textures from industrial and experimental music sources. Silences are exchanged with the sounds of hisses and hums. The pitch and volume of these noise are higher and act as guide into the Henry's nightmare.

Lynch along with his then sound editor and designer Alan Splet, created the soundscape by subtly

introducing layers of atmospheric sound on top of one another, as well as re-pitching and re-editing their recorded sounds. This included unseen howling wind. Lynch has stated in an interview with Mark Richardson that:

... we would set up sound experiments, sometimes in my living room. Al would bring his Nagra and microphone, and we would hit things and drag the microphone and just see what would happen, and then start altering that in any kind of way so that we could get some mood that would support the scene (2012)

By using a method like Pierre Schaeffer's *musique concrete* which contains the use of recordings of non-musical sounds are placed within a *musique concrete* score. Thus, music becomes blurred, unstable and constructs a feeling of an unreal reality.

Although most studies of *Eraserhead's* noise reach a consensus about its audible expression unsettling and jarring, so much about industrial sound is subjective and dependent on the listener's associations with similar sounds. For instance, one of the film's most prevalent sounds resembles air rushing through a vent. There are sounds that remain ambiguous depending on who is watching and listening to the film, but the audible cues depend on strong associations with familiar sounds. Chion asserts:

Sound has a precise function, propelling us through the film, giving us the sense of being inside it, wrapped within its timespan. The sound is animated from the inside by a perpetual pulsation. The noise of the machine, its micro-activity of particles, places us in a secure inner space like some bodily machinery... (2006, p. 42)

Subsequently, this notion of being inside the narrative "wrapped within its timespan" enhances the experience for the spectator where they become bound to the narrative taking a more interactive role within the story. The viewer becomes fully engaged rather than passively watching; the sound pulls them into the film almost like they're part of it. For Chion, Lynch uses noise to encourage a critical perceptual mode in engaging with Lynch's fictional worlds. These familiar yet uncanny sounds of

noisy machinery located in the soundscape, trigger a seemingly primal response placing us in what Chion calls a secure inner space. Thus, sound formulates different levels of engagement creating an atmosphere where the audience feels a part of the narrative allowing for further identification with the action on screen.

Meaning in film is obtained from sound and image association, the *acousmatic*, changes the way we hear and encourages a particular type of listening, which is intensified when its visual counterpart does not accompany the sound. The inability to identify the cause of the sound creates what Chion (1994, p. 72) describes as a “mystery of the sound source”. The separation of the sound from its visual counterpart, allows the viewer to interpret the character’s appearance, thus allowing imagination to take part in the depiction of the diegesis, personalising the experience and allowing this to influence its interpretation. Chion refers to this event as active off-screen; it raises questions of its source and “engages the spectator’s anticipation”. Chion suggests an active *acousmatic* sound facilitates curiosity; anticipation and encourages the audience to seek out its source. An active *acousmatic* sound has a direct role in the narrative and grabs the attention of the spectator in an attempt to identify its source whereas a passive *acousmatic* sound, which does not encourage the audience to find its source. Conversely, it permeates a sequence and produces continuity to the changes in shots. A passive acousmatic sound, however is, “sound which creates an atmosphere that envelops and stabilizes the image, without in any way inspiring us to look elsewhere or to anticipate seeing its source” (1994, p. 85).

The soundscape consists mostly of nondiegetic musical drones which function alongside the sound effects. There are two types of musical drones: a single note drone usually low which signals that a significant event is about to take place and a cluster drone usually high pitched sound which is used as a stinger to accentuate certain events. The sound effects and music both function on connotative and denotative levels: the relentless steam and machinery sounds, and ambiances not only give the mise-en-scène a semblance of actuality, they force upon the viewer the claustrophobia that Henry feels in his environment. The first time Henry enters his apartment building, the sound of the elevator is loud

and intense, suggesting Henry's subservience to the industrial world while the cluster drones are denotative as they facilitate a visceral shock which intensifies a disturbing event. The single note drones are connotative since they signify alarming events or emotions. Few scholars have given an analysis of what noise is in Lynch's work or what the noise may mean. Greene states:

In the film a complex relationship between synchronous and asynchronous sound exists due to the strange world Lynch creates. The industrial wasteland is visually shown in an early sequence, but it is the soundscape that continues this industrial bed of noisiness throughout the film, the noisy low end rumbling hum continues and rarely ceases. The industrial warehouses are not seen again, but the soundtrack asynchronously provides the disturbing mood to the domestic settings of Henry's home life. The world sounds menacing to Henry; it is a horror film based in a surreal world (2016, p. 22)

For Greene, the complex relationship between synchronous and asynchronous blurs the boundaries between sound design and score. This is due to the visible and non visible sources on screen. The soundtrack Lynch and Splet created goes beyond simple sound effects and music. This sound is heard throughout the film with minimum interruption. Through the unidentifiable soundtrack, Lynch creates an atmosphere of discomfort, tension and isolation.

Another possible reading of noise in Lynch's work according to Jacques Attali, everything starts with *noise* through which we begin to understand what it is to exist. He believes that, "By listening to noise, we can better understand where the folly of men and their calculations is leading us, and what hopes it is still possible to have" (1985, p. 3). For Attali, it is in noise that we find the underlying chaos of what it is to exist, to live and to change. Against this, Attali says that we should listen to the cacophony that surrounds us to not only recognize where the dominant paradigm falls short but to hear an echo of what the future will bring. He speaks of the refusal to draw conclusions from our senses, how the knowledge that is there is effectively censored. He thus emphasizes that "It is thus necessary to imagine radically new theoretical forms, in order to speak to new realities" (1985, p. 4). We might consider the droning to be reassuring white noise or the vibrations of a unified field of consciousness.

It is evident that in order to truly understand what this noise is and what this noise may mean a new approach is acquired. In the absence of significant scholarship on this topic I would like to propose a different prospective into thinking about the use of noise. The first part of this case study titled *Nada Brahman* I provide a brief overview of the theoretical framework regarding the Hindu concept of Nada Brahman. This refer to the Indian idea of a Sonic Absolute pervading all existence which is experienced in music. Hindus believe that because the range of sound accessible to us is limited, Nada Brahma, which is a form of practice that involves becoming aware of audible and inaudible frequencies: ‘the sound of silence’, or ‘the nada sounds’.

In the second section *The Man in the Planet*, I discuss the audio-visual elements in the prologue to *Eraserhead*. In this investigation I explore the audio-visual relationship between The Man in the Planet and the Hindu God Shiva. It is believed that Shiva is the master of Maya (illusion) thus becoming the creator and destroyer of the entire cosmos. In addition, Shiva is the lord of cosmic sound, particularly the great mantra Om or Aum from which the entire universe is said to derive from. Which accordingly is transcendental sound. I question the role of noise, by exploring Lynch's adoption of varying noises paying particular attention to the background noise of the drone and how this sound is Lynch's version of the Hindu sacred syllable Aum. Furthermore, I discover the importance the prologue has to Henry's story, in which I provide an interpretation of this sequence being an illustration of Henry's birth. This is followed by exploring Henry's fundamentally altered reality where I discuss a common question in Lynch's films, who's dream is it?

In the third section *The Lady in the Radiator* I explore the scenes involving the radiator and the lady who lives there. In this analysis, I use Hinduism to support my argument that The Lady in the Radiator is Henry's own distinctive vision of transcendence. Moreover, the solace Henry finds in the radiator has a parallel in Lynch's practice of TM, where you are given a very specific sound vibration thought to use as a mantra. This also includes establishing the importance of the drone used throughout the radiator sequences and how the drone relates to a sound vibration thought. As, I believe Lynch employs the use of a drone as a vehicle for transcendence.

Nada Brahma

Composer R. Murray Schafer proposed in *The Music of the Environment* to treat the world as a “vast musical composition which is unfolding around us ceaselessly” (2017, p. 54). Schafer termed this “the world soundscape”, describing it as a macrocosmic flow of sound composed of more limited soundscapes, or acoustic environments. According to Christoph Cox, Whatever the characteristics of particular soundscapes, the broadband sound of the sonic flux the totality of all sounds at any given moment could only take the form of a drone (2018, pp. 125-126). Schaefer explains the function of the drone is “a point of focus for meditation, particularly in the east... Man listens differently in the presence of drones... (1994, pp. 78-80).

Cox (2018, p. 126) details how Indian classical music testifies to the aesthetic and ontological primacy of the drone. In the Hindu text the Vedas and Upanishads they state that the fundamental connection between sound and the absolute are embodied in the syllable Om or Aum, which, chanted as a drone, expresses the totality of the universe. Cox further explains Indian musical scholars developed the concept of a primordial sound or vibration that precedes all created beings as the notion of Nada Brahman. There are two types of sound Ahata Nada is referred to all music, the sound produced when an object or instrument is struck and Anahata Nada or “unstruck sound,” the ordinarily inaudible cosmic vibration that makes empirical sound possible.

The question is how does one achieve this? Joachim-Ernst Berendt claims, “The New Man will be Listening Man – or will never be at all. He will be able to perceive sounds in a way we cannot even imagine today. These are the sounds discussed in *Nada Brahma*. These sounds *are Nada Brahma*” (1999, p. 7). Because the range of sound accessible to us is limited, *Nada Brahma*, ‘inner listening’ or ‘inner sound’ is a form of practice that lets the un-hearable be heard. This involves becoming aware of audible and inaudible frequencies: ‘the sound of silence’, or ‘the nada sounds’. The Nada sound resembles the murmur of wind and the continual lapping of the ocean waves. When it is heard all

external sounds disappear and one can listen to various subtle sounds. Therefore, our exploration of *Nada* extends beyond audible sound to wider concepts of harmony, balance, and rhythm.

Lynch has adapted this Hindu concept and applied it to *Eraserhead*, Allister Mactaggart proposes, “...in a Lynchian film, there is never any true silence; the Lynchian universe is constantly buzzing with the sounds of energy pulsating throughout it...” (2010, p. 9). He continues to say that we are perhaps brought, as Slavoj Zizek suggests, “to the point of hearing inaudible noises” (2016, p. 44). Although Zizek is referring to noise that is inaudible to the human ear, it is capable of being perceived and interpreted by human beings. David Sterritt also highlights, “rumors that the sound track emitted an inaudible drone that tapped into the audience’s unconscious...” (2008). Therefore, inaudible noise suggests a realm that exists beyond our perception.

The Man in the Planet

The prologue to *Eraserhead* is a bizarre yet interesting set of audio and visuals. The opening sequence sets in motion Henry’s story and depicts how Henry came to exist in the world of *Eraserhead*.

In his book *God talks with Arjuna*, Yogananda discusses the concept of Nada Brahma sound, being the Creator the origin of the whole creation is in vibration. He states, “God manifests in creation as the Cosmic Vibration, which expresses itself as Cosmic Sound and Cosmic Light” (1999, p. 707).

There are parallels between Yogananda’s teachings and in *Eraserhead* there are parallels which signify Nada Brahma sound, being the Creator. Lynch has implied that this sequence of events reflect this notion, “*Prologue* means what goes before, right? That’s exactly what it is. It’s very important what goes on there... there’s certain things that happen in that sequence that are a key to the rest” (2005, p. 63). This opens an interesting approach to investigate this sequence.

Like the Vedas the first manifestation in the prologue this sound or more specifically a consistent drone-like soundscape Lynch’s version of the vibratory power of Om or Aum slowly building in intensity before any image is displayed on the screen. According to composer and philosopher Dane

Rudhyar, in his book *The Magic of Tone and the Art of Music*, this type of noise is the creative sound which has “the power that gives birth to the many worlds of existence” (1982, p. 13). Similarly French philosopher, theorist and writer Michel Serres writes:

There is no space without noise, as there is no noise without space. One is an invariant aspect of the other, and reciprocally. Background noise is the background of the world, and the world began, it is said, with a big bang. (1995, p. 61)

Thus, noise is the foundation of meaning it needs it to come into existence as noise is “the backdrop of the universe, the background of being” (1995, p. 62). From this perspective, background noise informs an acoustic unconscious, generating powerful reactions in human beings. For Hazrat Inayat Khan:

With the music of the Absolute the bass, the undertone, is going on continuously; but on the surface beneath the various keys of all the instruments of nature’s music, the undertone is hidden and subdued. Every being with life comes to the surface hidden and subdued... The undertone of this existence is the loudest and the softest, the highest and the lowest; it overwhelms all instruments of soft or loud, high or low tone, until all gradually merge in it; this undertone always is, and always will be (2002, p. 58)

This undertone is referred to as, Aum and the drone has been used as a sacred devise. It is also believed that Aum represents three levels of existence which are located under the earthly dimension. One of these levels is called the netherworld or Patala. Lynch supports this claim, when explaining his decision on casting Jack Nance in the film’s lead role: “If you’re going into the netherworld, you don’t want to go in with Chuck Heston” (2015, p. 10).



Figure 1 Scene from Eraserhead (1977) Henry Spencer's head floating in space

The first image the audience encounters is Henry Spencer's head floating in space "dreaming of a vast space" (2003, p. 19). Superimposed over Henry's head is a planet resembling the moon. Arguably this is a visual reference to Shiva who is depicted with a crescent moon in his hair. (See image below).



Figure 2 Hindu God Shiva

The moon symbolizes Shiva's cosmic proportions, being one with time and his ability to control the mind. Additionally, the moon signifies birth alongside a place the power of procreation and destruction are. Inside the planet we encounter a character who lives inside, identified in the end credits as The Man in the Planet (Jack Fisk) "a kind of cosmic station master" (1992, p. 45). He gazes out of the window with a thoughtful look on his face, as he dwells in the decaying space around him with control levers, which initiate the events in the film. Like the supreme Intelligence who began to muse: "Long have I remained thus; alone, very peaceful, absorbed in My own bliss, consciousness, and wisdom. But now I am going to dream a cosmos" (2003, p. 19).

The Man in the Planet pulls a lever which opens Henry's mouth and a sperm like fetus emerges floating in front of Henry's face. The Man in the Planet pulls another lever John Alexander states, "A scream, like a steam train issuing forth, echoes in the incessant industrial rumble. It is a signal that announces the beginning of a process - an allegorical birth" (1992, p. 45). The sperm like fetus falls into a puddle of water. This echo's an extract from Yogananda's book, "When by the creation of duality the consciousness of Spirit separated Itself, a portion of that consciousness went out from Spirit as an active intelligent force... So when the seed of God's consciousness was planted in the soil of activity by His will, it sprouted into a vast creation" (2003, pp. 19-20). Finally, Henry surfaces through a dark opening into blinding white light something is born. Referring back to the Vedas first life expressed itself as sound, next was light.

The scene cuts to what appears to be the descending into Henry's nightmare reality with the hum from the other world continuing in the background. Henry walks through a bleak, industrial wasteland he eventually reaches his apartment block, the hum continues in Henry's flat, which he appears not to notice. Henry and the audience find themselves within a fundamentally altered reality. Or using a quote used from the Upanishads a philosophical religious texts of Hinduism in Lynch's book *Catching the Big Fish: Meditation, Consciousness, and Creativity* "... We are like the dreamer who dreams and then lives in the dream. This is true for the entire universe" (2016, p. 139).



Figure 3 Scene from *Eraserhead* (1977) Henry

However, who's dream is it. If we are to believe Yogananda then "... God is dreaming it all; that this cosmic creation is nothing more than a dream..." (2003, p. 20). Thus, Henry's world is a dream place, his life is not real, he is living in the greatest delusion, he is living in God's dream. This raises another question, if Henry's world is God's dream why is Henry's life a misery? Another common theme seen in Lynch's work. According to Yogananda this is because, "By identification of our consciousness with this world we see it as a place of suffering" (2003, p. 24). Yogananda further contends that God's dream creation is not meant to be frightening, it is meant to nudge you to realize that this dream has no reality.

The Lady in the Radiator

The scenes involving the radiator and the lady who lives there hold symbolic audio-visual significance to Lynch's belief in TM. In this analysis, I discuss how the soundscape and imagery relate to Hinduism: use this as a guide to interpret the meaning behind these scenes. *Eraserhead* is arguably the story of one man's conciliation with his own internal theatre. Desperate to escape his life, Henry seeks solace. His room provides him with some comfort. Speaking to Rodley, Lynch declares that Henry's room is cosy the only place where the tormented character has some respite, "It was just this one little place he had to mull things over" (2005, p. 67). He lives a life almost intolerable, lightened only by his strange visions of the Lady in the Radiator (Laurel Near), who

provides a curiously sacred space of warmth and refuge simultaneously singing from a tiny stage illuminated by a few dim footlights and surrounded by velvet curtains. As Lynch explains, “I thought she would live in the radiator, where it’s nice and warm, and this would be a real comfort for Henry” (2007, p. 21). Her otherwise ‘normal’ appearance is marred by her bloated, moon-like cheeks juxtaposed to her otherworldly, sickly, awkward, shown in her covered fist, which is held closely to her upper body, yet gentle swaying gestures provide another place for Henry to escape from the misery of his existence. The final embrace in the radiator Lynch sums up as “Henry goes to heaven.”

The stage within Henry’s radiator, or within his mind, becomes a location for the enactment or the performance of conflicts and fantasies. These visions are deeply theatrical; everything which takes place on that tiny chequered stage seems to be manipulated by unseen stage hands. This theatre stage, a monochrome version which looks similar to the stage in Lynch’s later film *Mulholland Drive*, as well as the stage in *Twin Peaks*. Nevertheless, it is the stage within the radiator that eventually offers Henry an escape, though whether into a blissful afterlife or an illusory dream of happiness is unclear. This ambiguity is a Lynchian trademark.

The solace that Henry finds in the radiator has a parallel in Lynch’s practice of TM. In July 1973, months before the Lady in the Radiator scene came into being, Lynch went to a TM centre in Los Angeles, where an instructor gave him a “very specific sound-vibration-thought” to use as a mantra. Ever since, Lynch has tapped into that sound-vibration-thought and has found in it a state of consciousness and happiness. The Lady in the Radiator is Henry’s own unique vision of transcendence, regardless of whether she is to be understood as real or not, as a form of Henry’s imagination or an actual, objective presence. The Lady in the Radiator is unrestricted openness to the constrained darkness of Henry’s world.

Lynch explains that the radiator is, “... the instrument for producing warmth in a room; it made me sort of happy—like me as Henry, say. I saw this opening to another place” (2005, p. 64). Lynch studied the radiator more closely and began noticing for the first time “a little kind of chamber, like a

stage in it” (2005, p. 64). The unexpected chamber allowed Lynch to build small doors and a stage into the structure, thereby granting the radiator the status of a magical theatre, an important trope in Lynchian cosmology.

The radiator thus provides the sonic atmosphere for Henry’s transcendence to escape his misery. For instance, the first time our attention is drawn to the radiator, is after Henry arrives home to find that Mary x has left him message inviting him to dinner at her house to meet her parents. A terrified looking Henry listens to a record on an old gramophone player and sits opposite the radiator with his draped wet sock. Staring into the abyss of the radiator Henry contemplates the unadorned cast-iron device. The organ music and all other external sounds slowly dissolves into the drone of hissing. Henry’s gaze moves toward the bricked window, and outside rumblings join the sonic mix until the hissing dies down to its normal, still prominent level.



Figure 4 Scene from Eraserhead (1977) Henry

Henry’s next contemplation involving the radiator happens when Mary and the baby are in his apartment. Like the first encounter jazz music is played at the start. The record player is spinning though the music has ended. Instead, a humming noise where the printed label meets the smooth inner ring of the record remains. Henry lets it continue to spin and lies face down across the mattress. He smiles at the radiator while Mary feeds the baby. The camera tilts up from the organic pile of soil to the radiator coils, now illuminated from within. Again, the hissing becomes louder. Amid the noise, a

creaking sound and a brighter light indicate the opening of the stage, which Henry sees only for a moment before the lights dim and the cry of the baby intrudes on his radiator: his place of refuge.

The organ music and external sounds that dissolves into the drone of hissing, are an audio cue of Henry experiencing transcendence. Ajahn Amaro describes the Nada sound as “... a high-pitched inner ringing tone. When you turn your attention toward your hearing, if you listen carefully to the sounds around you, you’ll hear a continuous high-pitched sound, like a white noise...” (2012, p. 10). As mentioned earlier, when this sound is heard all external sounds disappear and one can listen to various subtle sounds. Chion recognises this as fundamental noise:

The continuous and undifferentiated sound into which symbolically all the other sounds of the film can fall or dissolve; the sound into which everything in a given film tends to be reabsorbed and pacified, either by covering over all other sounds at a given moment or by revealing itself as the background noise we hear when all the other noises fall silent or return to it. A film’s fundamental noise (which always has a ‘complex mass’ to use Schaeffer’s term, i.e., no precise pitch) is often both a metaphor for the noise of the movie projector and a metaphor for the background noise of life. It is a metaphor of equalization, in that it creates the feeling that all the film’s sensations and feelings will become lost in it... (2009, p. 478)

For Lynch, fundamental noise suggests the soundscapes of daily life. As an aural envelope, it immerses and contains us within its parameters. As an auditory presence, it can surround and appear to come from within us. Generally, the soundscape conveys a roaming quality, while also being grounded in the representation of particular places. More specifically, the soundscape advocates a state of connectedness and detachment.



Figure 5 Scene from Eraserhead (1977) The Lady in the Radiator

The next appearance of the radiator is given special significance as a musical drone accompanies the steam drone. The visuals eventually verify the existence of a stage behind the radiator. In many respects, the sound effects exhibit more musical characteristics than the musical drones; they change pitch and contain inherent rhythms, while the musical drones always remain on one pitch and are completely devoid of rhythm. Mary has left Henry to look after their sick baby as he tries to go to sleep, he stares at the radiator. Drowning out the steady sigh of the vaporizer and the whines of the baby, the radiator hiss once again carves out a separate space. A new creaking sound layer indicates the opening of stage doors as the camera moves into the cast-iron structure. Now inside, the camera sweeps along the stage, and one by one, bulbs light up the checkered floor. “Stompin’ the Bug” by Fats Waller accompanies the Lady in the Radiator, who smiles and shuffles side to side, hands clasped to her chest. Fetus-like cords drop from above onto the stage the Lady in the Radiator continues to smile as she steps on them one by one as they fall.

Hazrat Inayat Khan explains “The sound of the abstract is called Anahad in the Vedas, meaning unlimited sound” (2002, p. 63). Khan suggests for those who are able to hear this sound they are released from their anxieties, and fears. It is believed that Anahata Nada, the unstruck sound, is a way to find union with God. Lynch employs the drone as a vehicle for transcendence and considers his use of drones as a way of directing his characters toward the abstract structure of the cosmos. Therefore,

the drone is an audio tool for connecting Henry with the spiritual wisdom and the energy of consciousness hidden in the universe.

Schafer believes “To relate all sounds to one sound that is continuously sounding (ie., a drone) is a special way of listening” (1994, p. 99). Schafer describes Anahata as the tone of ‘prime unity,’ a tonal centre conditioning an international sonic unconscious. According to Schafer when, during meditation exercises, students were asked to sing the tone of ‘prime unity’, they were most likely to sing B natural, which is the frequency of 60 hertz. Schafer, further claims that the tone prime unity is found in the ubiquitous hum “of all electrical devices from lights and amplifiers to generators” (1994, pp. 98-99), in the frequency of 60 hertz in the US and 50 hertz in the UK and Europe. This is of most significance as during each radiator sequence, there are specific moments where the pitch of the drone reaches levels of around 60 hertz. To help illustrate the image below displays the peak frequency spectrogram for this sequence. Also included is a sound clip. The pitch increases and hits the 60 hertz mark at around twenty seconds. The constant yellow line represents the pitch of the drone peaking between 60 and 61 hertz.

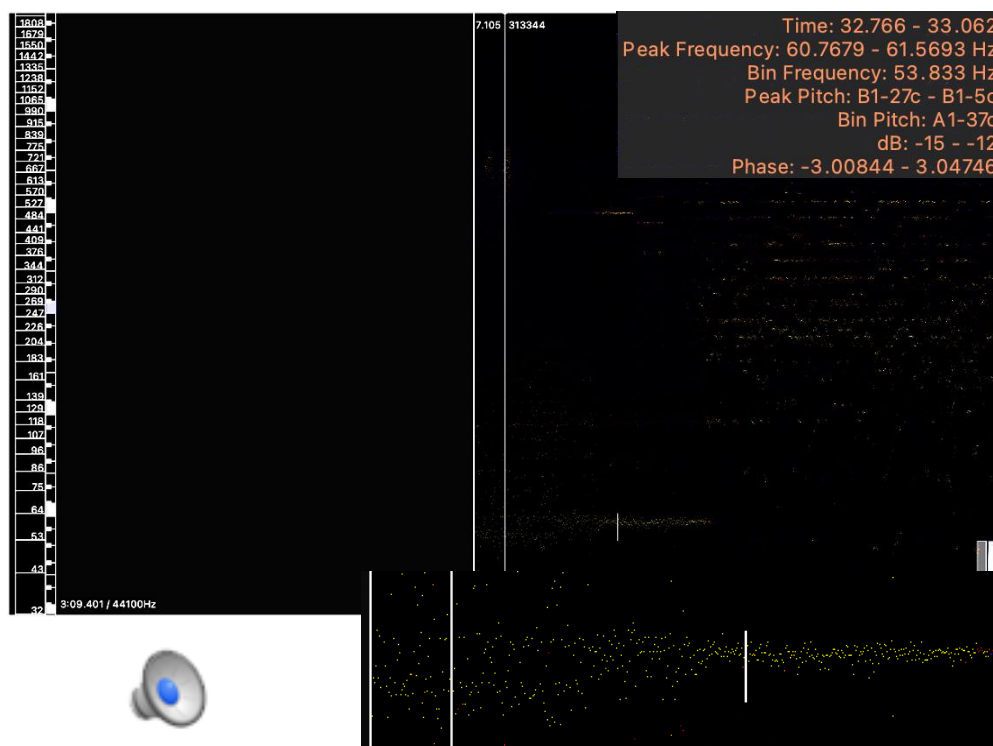


Figure 6 Peak frequency spectrogram radiator

Consequently, the drone is a doorway to an awareness that exists in the beyond. With the drone, the experience of a sound heard for an extended duration has the ability to cause powerful shifts in individual consciousness. Drones, embodying and manifesting universal principles of sound and vibration, invite a sense of shared participation, collective venture. The drone is a perfect vehicle for expressing alienation from conventional notions of the sacred either existentially, because of their relationship to the void that existentialists believe surrounds human activity.

When The Lady in the Radiator makes the next appearance, she is singing “in Heaven”, and symbolises the promise of escape to a place where “everything is fine.” When she finishes her song, Henry joins her on stage and takes her hand. During this moment the pitch of the drone increases again, a flash of white light and The Lady in the Radiator disappears. The Man in the Planet makes a quick appearance and then a shot of the Fetus-like cords appear which is then followed by a tree. Henry’s head, which is pushed out of place by a growing phallic baby head, falls to the stage, sinks through a puddle and then plummets from the sky and splats onto the pavement. A young boy picks the head up and takes it to a factory, where it is made into pencil erasers and tested by a factory employee.

The next image shows peak frequency spectrogram for this sequence. Also included is a sound clip. The pitch increases to the 60 hertz mark at around two minutes and forty seconds. The constant yellow line represents the pitch of the drone peaking between 51 and 61 hertz.

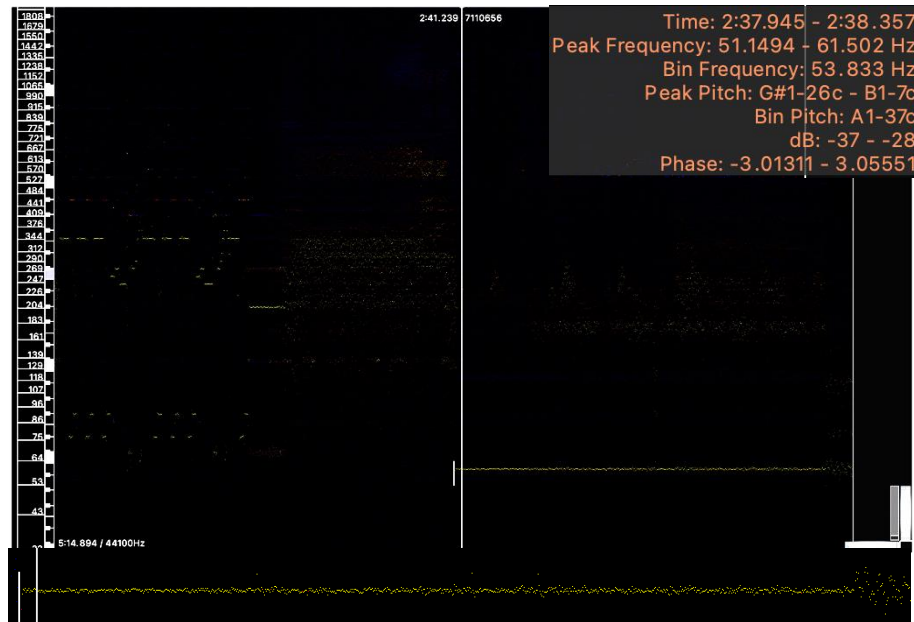


Figure 7 Peak frequency spectrogram radiator (2)

The Lady in the Radiator can be seen as representing Henry's ineffective search for a meaning and justification to his otherwise estranged existence. The Lady in the Radiator is the end toward which Henry's world is directed and the symbol of transcendence in a double sense: In the face of the lonely and alienated nature of Henry's being she is the promise of unbridled love and personal warmth, in the face of the gloomy and confined nature of Henry's environment she is the promise of unbridled brightness and deliverance.

What is also of interest is the flash of white light followed by the appearance of The Man in the Planet, the Fetus-like cords and a tree. These strange images actually have high significance as they show similarities to God presence. Consider the following quote from Yogananda:

To His devotees, God sometimes reveals Himself as a great light; or as the cosmic sound of Aum, or Amen; or as boundless joy, love, or wisdom. His light spreads like wings, all over eternity—such light that sometimes I see this earth in it like a dream. This world is a dream. God is in the intelligent, creative, vibratory sound of Aum or Amen that devotees hear... (2003, p.370)

The first sign of God's presence is the continuous droning pitch of 60 hertz followed by the white light. The Man in the Planet signifies the Hindu God Shiva. In addition to his role as cosmic creator and destroyer, Shiva known as Ardhanarisha, or the Half-Woman Lord. The body of Ardhanarisha is equally divided between the male Shiva on the left and the female Shakti on the right. Shiva is the root and trunk of the tree; Shakti is the branches, leaves, flowers and fruit. This could explain why The Lady in the Radiator disappears and a flash of The Man in the Planet is seen alongside the appearance of the tree.

Conclusion

Clearly the sound, which Lynch worked closely with sound designer Alan Splet, generates and propels the visuals thereby enhancing the cinematic experience. Its noisescape is still its most memorable element. What is audible? What is silent? The noises that things and people make are as crucial to the audience as they are to the characters and events within the film. The soundscape introduces subtle layers of re-pitched and re-editing recorded atmospheric sounds. This is layered on top of one another transforming natural, organic, familiar everyday sounds into otherworldly, eerie sounds. They engage the audience; are linked to different scenes and signify events that take place. Lynch's noise soundscape conveys a presence, invading the audience's personal space even though these sounds are seemingly rooted in reality. Lynch recognised the potential sound has in film and in *Eraserhead* he accomplished creating a soundscape that was able to control the images. Through the soundscape we are more aware of ordinary sounds due to their importance, leading them to appear to be strange. The musical drones and stingers are used with great effect which point to significant parts of the narrative. They function in the same way as sound effects though they are also part of the musical score. The noise amplifies the meaning of the narrative and evokes secrecy and questions of life.

While making *Eraserhead*, Lynch embarked on a new spiritual journey, a doorway to Lynch's

beautiful and dark world. What makes *Eraserhead* so complex is Lynch's use of artistic symbolism. *Eraserhead* centres on the theme of a parallel world only accessible through dreams, the radiator for instance the world behind the radiator. Like most of Lynch's later work the other theme is the stage and in *Eraserhead* these two are combined. It is important to understand that *Eraserhead* is not about dreams as it is the dream itself. For example, one of Lynch's favourite quotes which he used in his book *Catching the Big Fish: Meditation, Consciousness, and Creativity* "We are like the dreamer who dreams and then lives in the dream" (2016, p. 139). The same quote was also used in an episode of *Twin Peaks* from season three. However, Lynch never unveils this information, instead we take on the role of the detective like FBI Special Agent Dale Cooper in *Twin Peaks* seeking answers to the mystery he displays on screen. Consider, the following example, this excerpt from Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi*:

The lifelike images of the motion picture illustrate many truths concerning creation. The Cosmic Director has written His own plays, and assembled the tremendous casts for the pageant of the centuries... With inconceivable ingenuity God is staging an entertainment for His human children, making them actors as well as audience in His planetary theater (1946, p. 162)

In this instance The Man in the Planet is the "Cosmic Director" and Henry is made into "actors", thus The Man in the Planet is the creator and destroyer, Henry must withdraw within himself to perceive the images on the stage. Therefore, Henry like so many of Lynch's characters needs to wake up in order to unveil the illusion of his reality. This leads to the second theme; the theatre stage which functions as a visual metaphor to the characters and audience.

They symbolise the unveiling of secrets or in Henry's case the unveiling of his illusionary world. The visual symbolism indicates that The Man in the Planet represents God more specifically the Hindu God Shiva and The Lady in the Radiator as Shiva's counterpart Kali. For instance, the sperm like fetus which is seen at the beginning and falls into the back hole bringing Henry into existence, signifies the seed of creation thus the seed of Shiva. Like Kali who dances on Shiva, The Lady in the Radiator dances on the sperm like fetus during Henry's first encounter with her.

Chapter Four: A Dream within a Dream

You know, films are a world within a world. And maybe it's a world within a world within a world – within another world. It's a really beautiful thing how lost we are, and we want to get even more lost sometimes Lynch (2013)

Introduction

Mulholland Drive is one of Lynch's most complex works, which remains obscure and confusing. As with most of Lynch's work, *Mulholland Drive* sends the message that nothing is ever as it seems blurring the lines between what is reality and what is a dream, and how the two often interconnect. Likewise with Lynch's other works the serious plot twists and shuffled timelines of the events is very illusive. Thus, deconstructing the multiple layers is challenging in order to understand the message at the subtext of the story. The true genius of *Mulholland Drive* is in the way that it employs an intricate language of symbolism and metaphor.

Most academic studies focus on explaining the plot twists and how the characters are interwoven with one another to try and make sense of the difficult story line. By doing so, they often de-emphasize the need to understand how to decipher the symbols and metaphors which form a major driving forces in the movie. Therefore, this approach can be problematic because without a method for interpreting the symbolism, the story line is easy to misread. For instance, two of the major symbols in the movie are the blue key and the blue box. But you cannot totally understand these symbols without understanding why they are blue since symbolic colours are a major device running through the entire movie. With that said, I think there are many different depths to which you can go in an analysis of this film.

One can read a story within the story of *Mulholland Drive*. Or as Lynch would say "it's a world within a world within a world – within another world." However, reading it requires that we take any potential symbolic device within this film very seriously. Understanding film works is largely a matter of recognizing and decoding their signs. According to Robert Stam:

Viewed through the prism of semiotic methodology, the conventional elements of narrative structure—characters, plot patterning, setting, point of-view and temporality—can be regarded as systems of signs which are structured and organized according to different codes. Each of these signs communicates highly specific messages which relate to the story-world in diverse ways (2005, p. 70)

The Club Silencio scene has a particular meaning within the narration. It gains its meaning upon the projection of a theoretical or dreamed future. There are other cues that help to decode the scene. For Olson, “Mulholland Dr.’s paradoxical theme of two opposing realities existing at once” is a result of its director’s “belief in a Hindu cosmology” (2008, p. 546). Consequently, this influences the dream sequences which intentionally remain opaque, justifies and adds cohesion to the implicit Hindu references within the film. *Mulholland Drive* is full of opposing realities, in which two truths can and do coexist.

Specifically, the concept of the Veils of Maya the Hindu name for the belief states that we view life through a series of distorting veils that prevent us from seeing “actual reality”. Paramahansa Yogananda “Maya is the veil of transitoriness in Nature, the ceaseless becoming of creation; the veil that each man must lift in order to see behind it the Creator, the changeless Immutable, eternal Reality” (2003, p. 474). The image of the curtain usually presented in Lynch films as red curtains, suggests a veil that will be lifted or a gateway that will be opened to allow the spectator to see what lies behind. The curtain evokes the symbolic weight of the gateway. Similarly, to that of *Blue Velvet* for instance, the blue velvet curtain in the film’s opening credits is an invitation to the mystery beyond that is here presented theatrically. The blue curtain may be compared with the red one, in Lynch’s *Twin Peaks*, that separates the “waiting room” of the Black Lodge from the everyday. The Man from Another Place stares at him evilly. He says, “This is the waiting room,” suggesting that the Red Room belongs to neither the Black Lodge nor the White Lodge, but rather serves as an entryway to both realms. The curtains suggests that there will be hidden secrets that permeate the film, and that these secrets will be related to the existence of a hidden reality that lurks behind or beneath the surface.

Lynch has expressed his love for the cinema and how magical he sees curtains. For Lynch curtains are a way to transcend into another world. Lynch states:

It's so magical—I don't know why—to go into a theater and have the lights go down. It's very quiet, and then the curtains start to open. Maybe they're red. And you go into a world. It's beautiful when it's a shared experience. It's still beautiful when you're at home and your theater is in front of you, though it's not quite as good. It's best on a big screen. That's the way to go into a world (2016, p. 15)

We can see how Lynch's fascination with the cinema has informed the visuals of his films, but there is a deeper significance to Lynch's use of theatrical space. Yogananda states, "... You will see that these scenes now being enacted... They are the cosmic motion picture, as real and as unreal as the theater newsreel you have just seen—a play within a play" (1946, p. 162). Yogananda believes we must withdraw our attention from the plot playing out on the movie screen and focus it on the single beam of light emanating from the projection booth in order to perceive the true nature of the "Cosmic Movie" of Creation. For instance, this excerpt from Yogananda's book *Autobiography of a Yogi*:

... Just as the motion-picture images appear to be real, but are only combinations of light and shade, so is the universal variety a delusive seeming. The planetary spheres, with their countless forms of life, are naught but figures in a cosmic motion picture, temporarily true to five sense perceptions as the scenes are cast on the screen of man's consciousness by the infinite creative beam. A cinema audience can look up and see that all screen images are appearing through the instrumentality of one imageless beam of light. The colorful universal drama is similarly issuing from the single white light of a Cosmic Source. With inconceivable ingenuity God is staging an entertainment for His human children, making them actors as well as audience in His planetary theater (1946, p. 162)

Here we have the metaphor of light which is revealed to humanity through 'infinite creative beam' which touches and is 'true to five sense perception'. God is perceived to be an entertainer, a 'cosmic source' of sound and universe, within the 'planetary sphere' who uses the motion picture as an illusion of what life is meant to be, and the audience witnesses their screenplay. As Yogananda himself saw it, we are all of us legitimate members of the cast of actors in this universal pageant, performing images, cast onto the "backdrop of space," acting out plays within a play, as real and as

unreal as the images on a cinema screen.

Mulholland Drive's ethereal soundscape unlocks the secrets to the narrative, guiding the audience through the story with repetitious tones and forceful winds. Combined with Angelo Badalamenti's musical score of melodic strings and drone-based synthesizers the eerie soundscape operates on a transcendental level in which it speaks with unspoken intuition and immediacy. The arrangement of Badalamenti's score of deep repetitious tones mixed with Lynch's sound effects of slow rumbling reinforces the otherworldly characteristic of the film, taking the audience to a place of mystery and contemplation. It manages to mix and glide between moods subtly without startling the audience, as though it is being injected softly into the film and filtered out just as softly. The music could in fact be interpreted as sound design. Perhaps Lynch consistently uses sound in this way, as a means of transcending the mundane reality suggested in his films.

According to Badalamenti (2001), for *Mulholland Drive* he gave Lynch multiple tracks of what Lynch refers to as "firewood", this included low instruments basses, bassoons and clarinets. Lynch also developed his own way of recording the orchestra playing Badalamenti's score, in which he would play the tracks back at half and quarter speed. Lynch's audio engineer John Neff further elaborated on the techniques Lynch used to create the soundscape he states:

Dave likes to sometimes slow thing down, add a lot of reverb. He uses reverb like an instrument. Lots of long reverbs that then produce notes that we blend in, and things like that, so he really paints with a broad brush reverb wise (Dugpa, n.d.)

As one studies the soundtrack for the entire film, it becomes apparent that these stylistics are something of a sonic leitmotif. Badalamenti (2001) explains how Lynch wanted *Mulholland Drive*'s main title theme to be used at different places and in different ways throughout the film. Therefore, the film's main theme has been varied slightly for different characters and situations. According to Van Elferen (2012, p. 184), leitmotifs in Lynch's films are not tied to single characters or situations. Instead, they have been designed to haunt diegetic, meta-diegetic, and extra-diegetic spaces alike,

thereby loosening the boundaries between them. But it also evolves and changes, into a dark, brooding menacing atmosphere that reflects the anguish of the characters. This idea of a reoccurring yet ever changing use of a musical leitmotifs draws parallels to Lynch's notion of recognition and identity.

In this chapter my aim is to provide an interpretation of the film's audio-visual symbolic metaphors. My intention is to offer a new explanation of the significance to the soundscape, how it contributes to the eeriness of the narrative and generates a deeper emotional reaction from the film goer. This includes looking at the visual aspects and mysterious characters in an attempt to uncover the mysteries of the film.

In the first section I provide a brief description of the narrative outlining the key details of the film, in order to have a coherent interpretation of the complex narrative. The first scene in this case study titled *Betty and Rita go to investigate Diane Selwyn's apartment* I investigate the self-referral loop of consciousness and how this forms sound. Additionally, as with all of Lynch's filmic work strange sounds occupy the soundscape, however *Mulholland Drive* is the only one of Lynch's works to include the sounds of Tibetan singing bowls. In this section I explore Lynch's use of them and their importance as they only appear in the first half of the film, which is believed to be Diane's dream.

In the next section titled *Betty and Rita's love scene* I study Lynch's other use of Tibetan singing bowls and how they signify the characters emotions This is followed by *Club Silencio* a multi-layered investigation into the various audio-visual elements of this sequence. I explore Lynch's recurring motifs of the theatre and velvet curtains, alongside the performance by the magician and singer. I return to the Hindu concept of Maya (illusion) however unlike *Eraserhead* more emphasis will be placed on this concept to establish the connections with the themes outlined. Alongside this I observe how sound used in Club Silencio and its representation of the fourth state of consciousness the Pure

Transcendental Consciousness. This is followed by the importance of The Blue Haired Lady, colour symbolism and how these relate to Kali the Hindu goddess the destroyer of unreality.

In *Time to wake up* I look at Lynch's final use of the Tibetan singing bowls and how this sound has been applied. In *Winkie's Diner* dream I investigate the importance of The Bum and I believe he is a visual representation of the Hindu god Shiva. Furthermore, I argue how both these characters are important to the narrative and the roles they play.

Plot

For the purposes of this thesis, I will divide the narrative into its two distinct parts; the first sequence involving a girl suffering amnesia, Rita (Laura Herring), trying to recover her identity with the help of an aspiring actress, Betty (Naomi Watts), and the second sequence involving a distraught and failed actress Diane Selwyn (Naomi Watts) and her accomplished and unattainable lover Camilla Rhodes (Laura Herring). The first sequence acts as Diane's fantasy, a dream where she projects her feelings of frustration and desire into a world where she is still innocent and hopeful. The second sequence is the reality, where Diane hires an assassin to kill Camilla out of jealous rage. The film itself is sounds and images sewn together by a magician: the magician is Lynch. The intertwining of future and past, dream and reality, that structures *Mulholland Drive* suggests that we have little authority over who we are and what we do. The two narratives interact with each other in causally impossible ways: telephone calls placed in one narrative mysteriously reach phones in the second.

Betty and Rita go to investigate Diane Selwyn's apartment

From within her dream Betty must become a detective to discover who she is and what her purpose is. Lynch's use of sound reinforces the physical and mental discoveries which formulate transformations and changes in characters' especially Betty, as she comes to personal realizations while navigating the

horror that is her life. Through sound design, the film reinforces this disruption by reutilizing the film's musical motif and changing it to strengthen the darkness that surrounds Betty.

According to Van Elferen (2012, pp. 182-183), the folding into each other of diegetic, extra-diegetic, and meta-diegetic film-music levels in Lynch's films, contributes to the overlap of realities in his films. Boundaries between reality and imagination are crossed at high speed, borders between extra-diegetic distance and diegetic intimacy are rendered irrelevant note by note. In some cases, the difference between extra-diegetic and meta-diegetic music becomes virtually indistinguishable. This musical boundary blurring becomes most explicitly evident in scenes that have to do with dreams. The feeling one gets is that the music comes out of the silence, as each sound dissolves into each other. Chion evokes the question, "how does a sound get born from nothing and go back to nothing? How can something be there and then no longer be there"? (2009, p. 153). For Maharishi (1997, p. 82) in the dissolution and emergence of sound, consciousness identifies itself as knower, process of knowing and known in a self-referral move or a self-referral loop. This type of phenomena is where, one sound dissolves into the pure state of self-referral consciousness, from there a new sound emerges.

For instance, at Diane Selwyn's apartment complex, during Betty and Rita's investigation to trace Rita's identity. Upon which they find a dead woman who they believe to be Diane Selwyn. The whole sound design shifts direction in which sounds become merged with each other. Lynch infused subtle rumblings throughout portions of the film that added unsettling and creepy effects. The environmental soundscape of diegetic sound which features distant traffic noise, wind, and footsteps, becomes merged with non-diegetic sounds such as a faint rumbling noise, alongside Badalamenti's string music. In addition to a continuous tone resembling a Tibetan singing bowl, I will address the significance of the Tibetan singing bowls later. Consequently, blurring the distinction between diegetic, extra-diegetic, and meta-diegetic music.

As they approach Diane's apartment faint rumbling and Tibetan singing bowls are heard. Several

fainter Tibetan singing bowl sounds are heard after Betty knocks on the door there is no answer at all this time. So, Betty walks around to a side window to see if she can open it. One window is unlocked, and Betty opens it and then asks Rita to help her in. Reluctantly Rita helps her, and Betty gets in and opens the front door so she and Rita can go in. Once Betty breaks in and opens the door for Rita the rumbling and Tibetan singing bowls increase in volume. Once inside the pair make their way to the bedroom as they open the bedroom door the sounds get louder and infused with the score. They find whom they believe to be Diane Selwyn's corpse on the bed. Betty and Rita run out of the apartment terrified. Both Betty and Rita become visible in a form of superposition, with numerous images of their faces now flicker simultaneously on the screen.



Figure 8 Scene from Mulholland Drive Betty and Rita

The overlapping of sounds signifies Betty's transcendental self-referral state, in which the three values of Rishi, Devata and Chandas, inherent within pure consciousness or Atma, interact with each other. Maharishi (1997, p. 82) explains that the evolution of consciousness is structured in self-referral loops of infinite frequency. Each subsequent loop, following the previous, gives an elaborated version of knowledge bringing out another aspect of the expansion and return to the source in the self-referral move of consciousness. Through the return path, or self-referral feedback loop, from Chandas, Devata, to Rishi and back to Atma, or Unity. The unified field curves back on itself in order to know and express itself, and then creates from within. The basic concept is that the eternal, unbounded field of cosmic intelligence curves back on itself and creates primordial vibrations, or sounds. In other words, its capacity for self-referral, as a result of which, there always arises a spontaneous sound.

Lynch played upon the ability of a sound to function ambiguously and independently, thus intentionally obscuring its obvious meaning. Lynch has allowed the audience to be misled by certain ambiguous sounds, all the more effective because they are placed in the context of other ambiguous sounds. This is especially true when the sound does not automatically accompany an image. The sound creates a sense of all-encompassing and unknown terror as a low-pitched, loud rumbling pans across the audio track. The accompanying images are not of destruction but of the characters becoming aware of their surroundings or in other words represents the characters self-referral, self-interacting state. The rumbling reaches a peak when this realisation occurs.

Although this dynamic indicates a return to the knower where the self becomes united or in Betty's case awakening from her illusion. However, she is still struggling to come to terms with her reality, thus she is unable to escape from this illusion that she has created. Part of the sound design which signifies Betty's determination to stay within the illusion of her dream is the sounds from the Tibetan singing bowls. It is believed that the sound vibrations of Tibetan singing bowls have a significant effect on the body. It is thought that the sound that they produce is so strong that it creates an alternative state of mind a transcendental experience. Robert J. Wallis (2001, p. 218) explains that when Tibetan singing bowls are played in the presence of an individual in a trance or substance-induced state, the sounds created can alter that individual's state of consciousness. Therefore, leading one to experience cosmic states of mind, which are otherwise unattainable in a conscious state.

Wallis (2001, p. 218) continues to explain that the sound vibrations impact a person's nervous system, which engages in a relaxation effect. Through listening to Tibetan Singing Bowls, one's internal dialogue, the inner critic is quietened. Consequently, the singing bowls help Betty remain in the illusion of her dream or at least for a while until Club Silencio. It is worth noting that the singing bowls are only heard in the first half of film before the transition to reality. The other times these tones are used are the scenes leading up to Betty and Rita's love scene. The last time the tones are used is during the transition scene at Aunt Ruth's apartment after they visit to Club Silencio.

Betty and Rita's love scene

In this next section I examine how Lynch has use the Tibetan Singing Bowls for different propose.

Included in this review are graphs generated with freeware program Sonic Visualizer

(www.sonicvisualizer.org) to help visualise sound.

In Tibetan Buddhism it is believed that they are certain notes that are connected to each chakra. Betty is lying in bed with the door open, Rita appears wearing only a towel and stands in doorway. After some small talk Betty invites Rita to join her in bed instead of sleeping on the couch Rita agrees walks over to the side of bed and disrobes before getting in with Betty. The sight of Rita's naked body clearly makes Betty uncomfortable, and she quickly turns to look the other way. A few awkward moments pass before a conversation begins between the two.

Betty says 'it's more comfortable then the couch isn't it?'

Rita replies "yes".

A few more moments of silence pass before the conversation progresses Rita thanks Betty before she says goodnight. Rita leans over to kiss Betty's forehead, which leads to an awkward moment before the two kiss. If we turn to the graph Sonic Visualizer (1) and (2) from 0:44 to 1:33, we can see at what moments the Tibetan singing bowls are struck and how they relate to the action on screen. At 0:44 a Tibetan singing bowl in the note of C is struck.

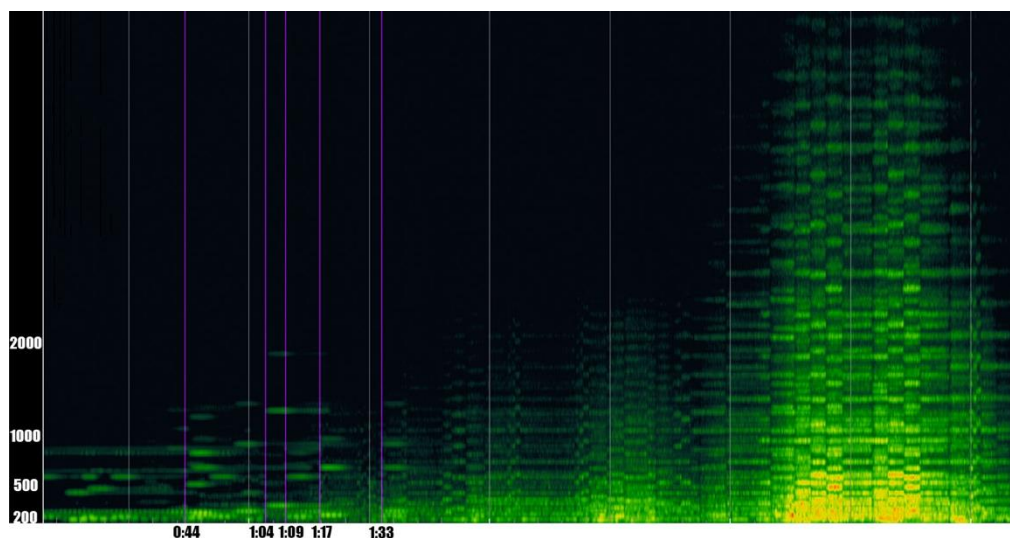


Figure 9 Sonic Visualizer (1)

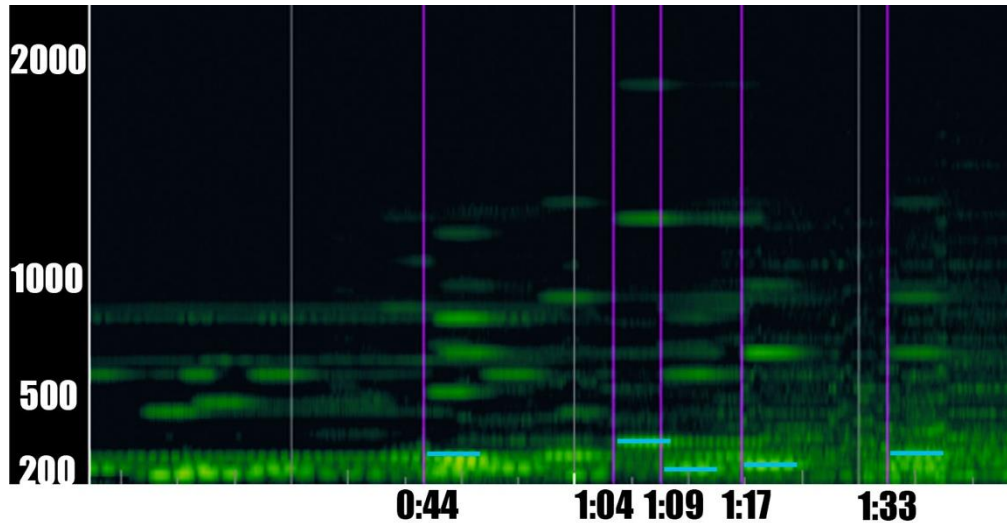


Figure 10 Sonic Visualizer (2)

It is during this moment that Betty becomes uncomfortable from watching Rita disrobe. In Tibetan Buddhism the C note is connected to the Root chakra, which is associated with issues of survival, and balancing experiences that create "fight or flight" (Chakras and notes and singing bowls). This reflects Betty's inner emotions towards the situation. Her feelings of embarrassment are a self-conscious emotion, which our mind and body see and react to as if it were a threat.

During their conversation at 1:04 a Tibetan singing bowl in the note of G is heard. It is believed that this note is related to the Throat chakra and is associated with communication, expression and speaking one's truth (Chakras and notes and singing bowls). As we can see from the dialogue Betty says to Rita 'it's more comfortable then the couch isn't it?' and Rita replies "yes". The G note represents the actions on screen between the two women. At 1:09, Rita says goodnight to Betty and kiss's her forehead, before the two kiss.



Figure 11 Scene from Mulholland Drive Betty and Rita in bed

The feelings between the two are felt by the audience through the sound as the note of the Tibetan singing bowl changes to F, The Heart chakra. This note is associated with compassion, friendship, empathy, and the ability to give and receive love. The last two notes heard are G 1:17 and then finally C 1:33, which represent the actions taken perfectly. As we have seen above that G is associated with communication, expression and speaking one's truth and C is associated with issues of survival, and balancing experiences that create "fight or flight".

Club Silencio it is all an illusion

Lynch is like the magician in *Mulholland Drive* reveals his tricks; he demystifies the acoustic spectacle that we have followed up to this point by dissecting it and demonstrating that "It's an illusion"! A cinema audience's view is reflected in a remarkable way in the Club Silencio. They are exposed to the same stimuli: a visual and acoustic illusion that envelops them in sound and confronts them with images. Lynch's characters and audience members must learn to withdraw their attention from the sensory world to bring their attention to reality.

The Club Silencio serves as a major turning point in the film, Silencio the Spanish word for silence is a visual signifier that Club Silencio represents the fourth state of consciousness the Pure Transcendental Consciousness which is just silence. In the fourth state of consciousness the mind and the senses are completely silent, but consciousness is fully awake. Thus, Club Silencio's specific function is a place of transition, going from one state of being to another, in addition to being a place for discovering self-knowledge. In which Betty/Diane's illusion is exposed, and the conception of reality questioned.

According to Jerry Freeman (2014), There are seven states of consciousness, the first three states are waking consciousness, deep sleep and the dreaming state of sleep which are known to every adult human being with a functional nervous system. The last four levels are transcendental, cosmic, god and unity consciousness. The fourth state of consciousness the Pure Transcendental Consciousness is

just silence. That's the state where the mind and the senses are completely silent, but consciousness is fully awake. This is all significant because, in the Vedic literature, the direct experience of the unified field of natural law during Transcendental Consciousness is said to take place in a *fourth* major state of consciousness. This profound state of inner peace is known in Sanskrit as *samadhi* ("unwavering mind"), or simply *turiya* ("the fourth"). What is the nature of Transcendental Consciousness? It is Unity Consciousness, an encounter with the field of unified consciousness. In Transcendental Consciousness, the mind experiences itself, intelligence experiences itself. The mind is the observer of its own reality. In that state, the mind is Transcendental Consciousness.

According to Maharishi (2001, pp. xxvi-xxvii) the experience of Transcendental Consciousness is the experience of consciousness knowing consciousness itself. This is the experience of the observer or knower (Rishi), the process of observation or the process of knowing (Devata), and the object of observation or the known (Chandas) becoming unified. Meaning it is all three itself it is the togetherness of knower, knowing and known called Samhita what Maharishi refers to as "pure knowledge". In the following analysis I explore how Lynch has applied Yogananda's teachings and the concept of Maya in *Mulholland Drive* alongside exploring Maharishi concept of Transcendental Consciousness on the Club Silencio sequence.

Betty and Rita enter the half-empty theatre of Club Silencio. A performance begins by a mysterious magician/MC (Richard Green) who is not named in the film but in the credits is named as Bondar walks on stage in front of the closed red theatre curtains from the side entrance. He begins to speak in English, Spanish, and French about the power of illusion he says, "No hay banda, il n'est pas d'orchestra, it is all an illusion". The magicians use of multiple languages reinforces this point, for it demonstrates the instability of the process of signification. He announces that "there is no band": "No hay banda! There is no band! Il n'est pas de orchestre! This is all ... a tape recording. No hay banda! And yet we hear a band". Here the magician is manipulating the sonic world of the stage as well as the audience. He informs the audience that the music they hear is an illusion, declaring there is no orchestra, that everything we hear is recorded: "It's all recorded, it's all a tape". He acts as an

imaginary conductor who directs an invisible orchestra. The two girls cannot identify the origin of a sound. Thus, the line between the real and the fictional begins to blur.

The magician continues his performance and states that the sounds behind his voice are an artificial construct; all the things the audience sees are false. Everything about the experience is fabricated and non-existent. Olson asserts:

...Magician's performances illustrate the core truth of the Hindu philosophy that Lynch has studied for years: our everyday world is an illusion (maya) of duality and multiplicity from which we need to wake up... in order to perceive the one, undifferentiated absolute reality (Brahman) (2008, p. 560)

The magician's performance emphasises that something is not what it seems. Through this, we can view Club Silencio as a representation of the deepest recess of Diane's subconscious, where her fantasy collapses on itself. The Magician like the Hindu God Vishnu is compelled to lift the veil of Maya in order for Betty to unlock the hidden knowledge within herself. The illusion created by the Magician in *Mulholland Drive* is caused by the power of the magician and the ignorance of the audience.



Figure 8 Scene from *Mulholland Drive* The Magician and Blue haired Lady

As the scene continues, The Magician says emphatically, “Listen!” indicating that in order to obtain inner knowledge of the self or one’s true identity, one must establish a level of Transcendental Consciousness, the silent, settled state of awareness, where the attention is directed inwards. When one “listens” to this silent sound, one becomes open to existence, a silent witness to their higher Self. Similarly, according to Voegelin, “In the quiet sounds of Silence the listener becomes audible to himself as a discrete member of an audience” (2010, xv). Thus, The Magician is calling on the attention of audience as well as Betty to escape the illusion. From here the sequence shifts course beginning the transition between illusion and reality.

As he stretches his hands up, the sounds of thunder, lighting and roaring are heard. These sounds are heard while the blue overtakes the entirety of the theatre is atmospheric. It is not quite the sound of wind, but it does evoke a sense of emptiness, otherworldliness. The sound of thunder signifies an awakening. Interestingly during this moment, a shot of The Blue Haired Lady is seen up in the balcony (see image above). I will come back to address the importance of The Blue Haired Lady later.



Figure 13 Scene from Mulholland Drive The Blue Haired Lady

Lynch forces us to follow The Magician’s instructions. The gain is turned up enough that the soundtrack becomes our focus, and the grain of each noise is brought to the fore. With all of this excess aural detail, the boundary between the film world and the real world falls away and the room becomes something we do not just see and hear, but rather something we feel. Lynch forces his

audience to prioritize sound, giving it heightened relevance and intention in the film. Do the performances at Club Silencio unlock a hidden knowledge within the characters? Or is there some ethereal connection?

Van Elferen (2012, p. 181) states, In Lynch's films, music interferes with people's insides; as a result, music can also change the outside world. The thundering sounds causes Betty to start shaking uncontrollably in her seat. It is believed (V, 2018) that when a soul is subject to the illusion whilst it is caught up in the material of things. The truth emerges and the soul remembers its true nature, the mind and the senses are withdrawn, and the ego is subdued. The ego and our desires form a veil of ignorance around the soul and keep it in bondage to the Nature. However, when these are removed, the soul is freed and becomes self-absorbed. This happens when an individual is shaken out of his or her mindsets and undergoes a shift in awareness. Voegelin (2010, p. 83) When there is nothing to hear, so much starts to sound. Silence is not the absence of sound but the beginning of listening. This is listening as a generative process not of noises external to me, but from inside, from the body, where my subjectivity is at the centre of the sound production, audible to myself. Silence reveals to me my own sounds: my head, my stomach, my body becomes their conductor. This signifies a transformation within Betty taking place, where everything that had previously been considered to be 'me' Betty is seen through and discovered to be just some phenomenal thing going on. It is not me! Betty's ego that feels important discovers that this is not who she is. From her inner silence of the Atman, the whole outer world is seen as illusory. You can also call this state a Witness Consciousness you can say that the pure consciousness now is understood to be my real self. My sublime self is actually that pure, eternal consciousness.

Maharish (1985, pp. 65-66) explains, The Unified Field of Consciousness creates a dynamic structure within its eternal silence. This structure is vibrancy of Supreme Intelligence in the form of sound. When this unbounded ocean of consciousness reverberates as a three-in-one field, it begins to vibrate within itself, and these vibrations of the field are the primordial sounds of nature, the Vedic sounds. Maharishi continues to explain (1985, pp. 65-66) states "This phenomenon is not open to anyone

except itself. In this self-referral, self-interacting state we have noise”. It creates vibrations within itself. Since these sounds are the sounds of the self-referral dynamism of consciousness, they are available to anyone in one’s own self-referral consciousness. The sound is, therefore heard by consciousness alone or in the case of Club Silencio the sound is heard by Betty alone. As Maharishi explains this phenomenon, “Consciousness gets engaged in perceiving its own manifestations” (1994, p. 318).

The ensuing reaction shot of Betty in the balcony, is paired with the mysterious presence of The Blue Haired Lady (Cori Glazer), initiates a fundamental key change where Betty’s world will be shaken and literally inverted. A flashing blue light similar to the one that appeared to Laura Palmer in her bedroom and to Fred Madison in his prison cell invades the screen as the sounds of thunder and a muffled explosion continue. In the Kena Upanishad (4.4), flash lightning symbolically represents an inner awakening and self-realization. The thundering stops. Betty is released from her spasm of shaking. Does this sound and her convulsions shock her back into reality? Thus, providing a spiritual awakening and awake into a new world of awareness.



Figure 14 Scene from Mulholland Drive Betty and Rita

After this, the magician crosses his arms over his chest as blue smoke or clouds comes up from the ground and covers him. Then he vanishes. As the magician makes his exit, blue lights continue to flood the theatre for a little while symbolizing that a transition is occurring. Although the magician’s

performance is mysterious, the meaning is clear: the smokescreen of surface events that we think we perceive is merely an illusion that masks the reality, the truth, underneath.

The focus then turns to the expressionless enigmatic figure of the Blue Haired Lady (Cori Glazer). We first see her sitting in a high booth by the side of the stage at the same time, Betty starts shaking uncontrollably. The Blue Haired Lady is a special type of transitional guide her blue hair is an indication that she is from the realm of the metaphysical. In Hinduism Blue is a representation of a god or goddess. In Hindu philosophy, it is believed that Kali is the Hindu goddess (or Devi) of death and time. She is most often depicted as blue in Indian art. Kali along with her husband the great Hindu god Shiva grant liberation by removing the illusion of the ego. She is the counterpart of Shiva the destroyer who is also believed to have had a blue throat. They are the destroyers of unreality. The ego sees Mother Kali and trembles with fear because the ego sees in Her its own eventual demise.

The Blue Haired Lady's presence and purpose are never explained however the blue haired lady appears to be a goddess motif. She observes the audience at Club Silencio as their illusions fall away and reappears at the end of the film at Club Silencio merely utters "silence" in a monotone voice. I interpret this to mean that the truth she is there to guide Diane through is related to what the magician was doing, but it goes beyond that into a completely new revelation. In fact, this second truth is more of a consequence of the magician's truth and it concerns one of the reasons why a theatre scene was necessary to impart this truth. As far as the magician was concerned, the theatre is involved in his message because it is a place where entertainment happens that is filled with illusion, but his lesson might also have been pulled off in a movie studio. But the lady with the blue hair needs an old theatre with a box seat that overhangs the stage to impart her particular truth. This is because her truth involves death, and in particular death by assassination. Like the magician The Blue Haired Lady shows up to uncover a reality that Diane has repressed. So the implication is that Rita's miraculous survival is just yet another misleading illusion. Diane's confrontation with the truth is not a rosy and so the blue haired lady is a grim guide, and since she is a messenger of death, we shall meet her again at the end of the movie. A quote used in Lynch's book *Catching the Big Fish: Meditation,*

Consciousness, and Creativity found in the Upanishad states:

Know that all of Nature is but a magic theater, that the great Mother is the master magician, and that this whole world is peopled by her many parts (2016, p. 15)

After the magician vanishes, out comes a man in a red suit, serving as the MC now that the magician is gone. In Spanish, he announces the following, "Senoras and senores, el Club Silencio les presenta... La Llorona de Los Angeles, Rebekah del Rio." This translates to, "Ladies and gentleman, the Club Silencio presents... The Crying Lady of Los Angeles, Rebekah del Rio." When she gets to the microphone, she begins singing the Spanish version of "Crying," written by Roy Orbison. The lyrics are symbolic of Diane's illusory relationship with Camilla. Betty and Rita cry while holding hands. When Rebekah del Rio falls down on stage and her voice continues to sing, the moment reinforces the illusion the magician has established.

Club Silencio is, essentially, the film's complexity is broken down. Diane is in shambles, eager to believe that the truths of her existence are not what they are, replacing bits and pieces with a more comfortable narrative. Club Silencio reveals to her that self-delusion only works for a while; illusion is temporary, and when the magic ends, the show is over. She has become aware of her reality and the world she was living has disappeared. Like a dream all the things she had become attached to and thought to be the source of her happiness were actually the cause of her own suffering. Club Silencio brings her back to a reality however she cannot cope with it, and she takes her own life.

Time to wake up

As soon as the performance of Llorando is completed, and Diane accepts that nothing she has been living and seeing is real, she grabs her bag and reaches for the blue box. She and Rita return back to Aunt Ruth's apartment from Club Silencio. Much like the scene where Betty and Rita go to investigate Diane Selwyn's apartment, the soundscape is shifting between a rumbling sound, Tibetan

singing bowl tones and Badalamenti's string music.

Once inside the apartment Betty/Diane vanishes, leaving Rita/Camilla to use the key to open the blue box however it reveals a void of nothingness. Suddenly, the camera zooms into the darkness of the box with a whooshing sound. The box drops and lands on the floor, the music cuts abruptly, only the ringing of the singing bowl remains, softly fading away. Rita is gone. All we hear is silence. Then slowly the camera moves up to the door of the bedroom and we see Aunt Ruth walk into the hallway and then look into the room. Though, she sees nothing and leaves the room.

The fantasy is now just about completely over but Betty/Diane still must wake up. The camera tries to fade out of Aunt Ruth's apartment in the fantasy and fade into Diane's apartment in real life. But because Diane's mind does not want to let go of the fantasy. And so, since there is some resistance, the camera represents this resistance by fading in and out twice while trying to make the transition. A rumbling and whooshing noise occurs as the screen fades to black for two seconds on the first attempt and continues on the second. Alongside this the singing bowl and score drift in and out once again. Here the message we are being given is that Diane is not looking forward to going back to her real life. Once the dream ends the film then transitions to Diane in reality and a sequence of flashbacks tell the true story of what happened and explains the presence of various mysterious figures from the dream.

The Blue Key and Box

Colours are symbolic cinematic device that Lynch implicates frequently. In *Mulholland Drive* blue is the most prominent colour and is used for two of the film's major symbols the blue key and the blue box. But you cannot totally understand these symbols without understanding why they are blue since symbolic colours are a major device running through the entire movie. Blue signifies the transition from one dream state to another the colour blue is a type of vehicle for shifting in the domain between the realms. Perhaps therefore Lynch uses the colour blue to symbolize fundamental transitions in

Diane's inner and external reality. For example, Club Silencio's name is written in blue neon tubes above a shiny blue door, indicating that this club will be a place where secrets are revealed. Blue represents a container just like the blue box that will transition her out of her fantasy. In the Club Silencio scene near the end of the fantasy, we see several different types of blue transitional objects. I believe this is because Diane is being transitioned from the fabrications of her fantasy into the harsh truths of her real life in stages that lead to her ultimate reawakening. But the transitions do not get completed at the club. The magician at the club leads the first transition by revealing the illusive nature of the fantasy, and then initiating a routine where blue light and electricity transmit a truth to Diane. This truth that Diane confronts is related to why Betty begins shaking with uncontrollable spasms.

Winkie's Diner dream scene

Perhaps one of the most mysterious scenes in *Mulholland Drive* is the first scene at Winkie's Diner, wherein a detective named Dan (Patrick Fischler) tells his partner, Herb (Michael Cooke), about a strange recurring dream that he has been having. What may at first seem like a departure may upon closer inspection have more relevance than we realize. This sequence informs the audience of the importance of dreams for instance the idea that dreams and waking life are not so far removed from each other. Thus, it makes us question the reality of these events, and whether what we are seeing is really happening or not.

Another mystery in the scene is The Bum played by Bonnie Aarons. Although The "Man" behind Winkie's is played by a woman, the character is referred to as a man. Olson suggests "the Winkie's Dark One may represent the goddess Kali, the blood-thirsty destroyer always portrayed with a blackened face" (2008, p. 577). If Olson is correct as mentioned above Kali is the destroyer of unreality and when the ego sees her it trembles with fear. Unlike the scene in Club Silencio where Betty engages in spiritual practice to remove the illusion of the ego, Dan is still attached to his ego and is not receptive to Kali therefore she appears in a fearsome form. However, The Bum may be the

Hindu God Shiva as the Bums visual appearance resembles one of Shiva's other forms. Shiva or "Siva is also known as the beggar Bhikshayatana and the skull-bearer Kapalini" (Flood, 1996, p. 157).

In the dream, Dan is frightened, and he sees Herb, standing across from him, also frightened. This is because outside behind the diner there is a man who lives there, with a horrible face that Dan cannot forget. Dan looks up to see that Herb is now standing in the position he was in during the dream. Both Dan and Herb are afraid, for no reason that is explicitly given. Somehow, their fear is connected to the Man Behind Winkie's. He's doing something that is causing their fear. But what exactly is he doing, and why does it make Dan and Herb so afraid? Dan somehow perceives the Man Behind Winkie's through the wall and his face disturbs Dan so deeply that he falls short in describing it. He says, "He's the one... he's the one that's doing it. I can see him through the wall. I can see his face. I hope I never see that face ever outside a dream".



Figure 9 Scene from Mulholland Drive Dan and Herb

This feeling of dread, this "god awful feeling," has followed Dan around ever since having these dreams. Herb prompts Dan to come with him to see if the Man is really back there. He gets up and goes to the counter, exactly where he is standing in Dan's dream. Dan's anxiety increases when he notices this, but he finally gets up and leads Herb outside the diner, despite his sense of dread.

Reluctantly, Dan leaves with his partner and the two ventures behind the diner. The two slowly walk towards a wall, the scene concludes to reveal The Bum, who like Shiva "is an outsider, who scares by

his look; and sometimes charms” (Smith, 1996, p. 162) terrifies Dan so viciously that he falls into Herb’s arms.



Figure 10 Scene from Mulholland Drive The Bum

Alongside the Bums appearance there are other factors which lead to the conclusion The Bum is Shiva. For instance, the actress who plays The Bum Bonnie Aarons was asked, in an interview, “What context were you given for the scene with the blue box”? (2014). She replied with the following:

There was fire all around me, and the thing I remember [Lynch] saying was, “This is your box. It belongs to you. And then I want you to look at it, study your box, and then just drop it into the bag.” (2014)

It is believed that Bhikshatana is Shiva's form in the Pine Forest just before he performs his dance, in which Shiva manifests himself as a flaming pillar (1999). Shiva in his Nataraja form dances within a flaming halo (*Prabha Mandala*) that symbolizes time and is presented in a circle as it is cyclical and never-ending. It is important to note that during this scene red smoke fills the screen with The Bum. See image below.



Figure 11 Scene from Mulholland Drive The Bum and Box

This form of Shiva as a cosmic dancer is Shiva during the apocalypse dances called the cosmic dance of Shiva “tandav” symbolizing the interplay of dynamic and static divine energy flow, which contains five principles of eternal energy- *creation, preservation, destruction, illusion, and emancipation*. The destruction initiated by Shiva with his cosmic dance is a medium for recreation and the cycle never ends. Thus Nataraja, the king of dance is associated with the creation and destruction of the world or we may say of illusion and ignorance that lead humans away from reality.

Likewise, the key and box which belong to The Bum are also symbolic visual references to Shiva. The key has the design of a crescent moon an item Shiva is depicted with on the side of his head. Inside the box there appears to be the symbol of a Lingam and a Yoni. In Hinduism, this is an object that symbolizes Shiva and is revered as an emblem of generative power. Whereas the Yoni is the symbol of the goddess Shakti or (Kali), the feminine generative power and, as a goddess, the consort of Shiva. The two symbols together represent the eternal process of creation and regeneration, the union of the male and female principles, and the totality of all existence. See image below.



Figure 13 Mulholland Drive Blue key and box



Figure 12 Lingam and a Yoni

Conclusion

Like *Eraserhead* the world of *Mulholland Drive*, is a dream place, all are dreaming here. However, Lynch has taken *Mulholland Drive* much further than *Eraserhead*, “Each existence is a dream within a dream...” (2003, p. 23). *Mulholland Drive* is a depiction of the divine play the cosmic dance of Shiva and Shakti (Kali). Maya-lila is the concept that creation is continuous, ceaseless cycles of creation and destruction. There are multiple realities, they are transformable, with blurred definitions between divine play and non-play. Betty/Diana mistakes the play for ultimate Reality. Mistaking the play for ultimate Reality puts Betty/Diana on quite an emotional roller coaster. She becomes at the effect of what is happening in the play. Identifying with Maya is the cause of her suffering. This illusion of separation lead to her intense feelings of isolation. Betty/Diana believed she was alone and became anxious and depressed. Leading her to fear rather and hate. Listening to the magician’s

explanation of illusion at Club Silencio reminded her it has all been unreal. Thus, the Divine itself will part the curtains and reveal the stage? To answer the question of who am I? Club Silencio functions as the as the fourth state of consciousness. The place where Betty/Diane is able to gain knowledge through exploration of consciousness. Thus, the sounds heard are the sounds of her consciousness interacting with itself becoming unified it is all three itself it is the togetherness of knower, knowing and known.

The Blue Haired Lady represented the Divine, the Goddess Kali alongside her blue hair there are other visual signifiers that imply this. For instance, “Know that all of Nature is but a magic theater, that the great Mother is the master magician, and that this whole world is peopled by her many parts” (2016, p. 15). The only times we see The Blue Haired Lady is at the club seating high above in the balcony watching the magician’s performance and at the end of the film again seating high above in the balcony. She presides over the events of Club Silencio without intervention, appearing to be moved by the plight of those observing their illusions fall away. This is further enhanced by the ending, which shows the idealized Betty and Rita together in complete and utter eternal happiness while the blue wig lady says "silence". Her blue hair is an indication that she is from the realm of the metaphysical, or representative of it as that shade of blue is associated with the mystical. The blue box and key are therefore also metaphysical. She represents the illusion that surrounds us from which we cannot escape.

Thesis conclusion

It is safe to say that Lynch has helped to define the role of sound and music within contemporary filmmaking. His development of ideas and ability to create unique examples of sound design has become his trademark when making films. Throughout my investigation I have come to understand that Lynch's unfailing desire for rich audio-visual filmic feasts has allowed for some of the most sonically engaging films ever to come alive. Whether they are critically or commercially successful is of little importance. What is important is that Lynch's films are noted for their unique approach to the role of sound and music in relation to what the audience experiences visually and sonically.

Throughout my research it has become clear that Lynch's various uses of sounds has given his films an added dimension, a dimension that reinforces the on-screen imagery, but at the same time creates a new depth that visual imagery cannot achieve. In addition to this Lynch has enhanced the audience's filmic experience through his carefully chosen soundtracks that have become synonymous with his films.

The aim of this thesis was to explore and investigate the link between Lynch's soundscapes and TM in Lynch's cinematic universes. From this study it become clear, that his narratives are made up from background noise and silence, which form the sonic story and give it added depth. Sound is central in engaging the audience in a David Lynch film. Unlike images, which are confined within the frame, Lynch's soundscapes signify something beyond the image. These soundscapes are combined with dreams, which are not completely understood within the context of the narrative, often finding themselves contrasting reality with surreal moments. It became clear that David Lynch views both light and dark as structuring elements of life and that these elements are locked in a cyclical balance. From my research, I have found that although noise and ambience destabilise the relationship between the film's contents and the film itself, sound both influences and directs Lynch's audio-visual narratives from a different perspective thereby producing a counternarrative. However, I postulate that this is the result of Lynch's belief in Hinduism. Moreover, it provides an insightful investigation on how Lynch's use of TM facilitates a specific way of using sound to expound his narratives.

The purpose of Lynch's stylistic choices suggests that there is more beneath the surface to the world. If we listen closely to the sounds of our environment, we will hear the messages of the world and look within ourselves to find deeper meanings or is Lynch simply manipulating the audience's understanding and expectations. Especially, with the implicit influence of TM within his films. This thesis offered an interpretation of the meaning behind some of his most iconic work by approaching his sound design in a unique way. Nevertheless, it my understanding these films deal with the attempts of their protagonists to escape their harsh realities. Because Lynch's characters identify with Maya this is the cause of their suffering. Because the characters mistake their true self for, they egos, they have become attached to their false reality.

Like some Hindus Lynch's characters have forgotten their connection to the Divine and to each other. This creates an illusion of separation leading to extreme isolation. This causes Henry and Diane to become anxious and depressed creating fear. Because Lynch has broken down that separation between the film and the audience these feelings are felt even more so by the viewer. Ultimately, I believe the message Lynch is trying to convey to his audience is that "this world is a dream place", in which we are all dreaming here.

By observing the three key elements of audio narrative (background noise, silence and dialogue) in Lynch's films one is able to witness the highly effective and often complex relationship between the sound and image that confronts the audience. This is a relationship full of peaks and troughs, but one that always maintains a unique flow allowing the viewer to be pulled along whether visually or sonically into the far-flung reaches and personal universe of David Lynch's often abstract mind. A David Lynch film is an experience. His unique soundscapes and disorienting camera effects are designed to take the audience out of their comfort zone and impose upon them feelings that they would otherwise try to ignore.

Where *Easerhead* focused mostly on listening to the sound of the universe, *Mulholland drive* focused on listening to the sounds within.

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Twin Peaks

(2017) Directed by Anonymous ABC, Showtime.

Mulholland Drive (2001) Directed by Lynch, D. Universal Pictures, BAC Films.

Twin Peaks

(1991) Directed by Lynch, D. CBS Television Distribution.

blue velvet (1986) Directed by Lynch, D. De Laurentiis Entertainment Group.

Dune (1984) Directed by Lynch, D. Universal Pictures.

Eraserhead (1977) Directed by Lynch, D. Libra Films.