BLUE RESIDUE: PAINTERLY MELANCHOLIA AND CHROMATIC *DINGNITY* IN THE FILMS OF DAVID LYNCH

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> It may be said that blue still brings a principle of darkness with it […] and in its highest purity is, as it were, a stimulating negation.
>
> — Goethe

> Blue unfolds in its lowest depths the element of tranquility. As it deepens towards black, it assumes overtones of a superhuman sorrow.
>
> — Kandinsky

> At first there is nothing, then there is a profound nothingness, after that a blue profundity.
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> — Yves Klein

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of painting, color has taken on an occasionally fetishistic dimension, often regarded as either a decorative illusion, distracting from reality, or as an extravagance that allows a commonplace object to reflect something operating beyond or below the field of representation. According to Robert Finlay, because of color's "mute, unavoidable visibility" that makes it "an unruly, disruptive element", it has been categorized as either a "mere sensation" or a "perverse indulgence."[1] I would like to explore this unruly, perverse potential of color with focus on a different visual representational medium: the painterly films of David Lynch. I particularly want to focus on, what I will somewhat metaphorically refer to as, their anamorphic use of color as a means of narrative disruption and distortion. Focusing on *Blue Velvet* (1986), *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me* (1992), and *Mulholland Drive* (2001), this essay will explore the Lynchian melancholic underworld through a close analysis of his deployment of color, particularly the color blue.

On the surface, his films wear the codified appearance of Hollywood dramatic realism, but they are also covered by a noticeable residual patina of a more archaic-feeling

magical intent that often disrupts this appearance and its very classical symbolic coordinates.[2] Through an extreme close-up focus on Lynch's near fetishistic use of blue and its associated melancholic mood, I will illustrate how these three films indirectly dramatize what Julia Kristeva would call a "semiological representation" of his films' own battle with narrative collapse.[3] Because color can already be disruptive to narrative reality, Lynch's denaturalized and defamiliarized use of the color blue, I argue, visually alludes to a pre-narrative, and even pre-cinematic, object by making visible a distortion caused by the signifier "blue", managing to represent the Thing in its depraved state, and, therefore, paradoxically signifying "that which in the real […] suffers from the signifier."[4] Since Julia Kristeva argues that "any narrative already assumes that there is an identity stabilized by a completed Oedipus",[5] I will interpret Lynch's resistance to narrative closure as his own cinematic method of approximating the melancholic condition of narrative collapse. The filmmaker's eccentric, almost meta-diegetic, use of blue, I argue, highlights a resistant point within the domain of his narrative field of representation that remains detached from participation and, therefore, unsymbolized and interminably mourned.[6] Being an accomplished painter himself, Lynch fetishizes the color blue in these three features in order to demarcate his aesthetic liberation through and against the narrative norms and conventions of commercial cinema.[7] In this manner, Lynch's fetishism takes on the type of subversive role of which Henry Krips speaks by undermining the codified mode of Hollywood narration.[8] Ultimately, Lynch's strategic use of the color blue to represent the lacking lack (the over-presence of the Thing in the melancholic condition) minimizes his film's meaningful reception while simultaneously and paradoxically providing the communicable inscription of the melancholic condition—an unfinished mourning for the original lost potential of cinema that only exists as lost.[9] Before I turn, specifically, to his films, however, I would like to first consider more closely the relation between Lynch's anamorphic use of blue and melancholia.

ANAMORPHOSIS, MELANCHOLIA, AND THE CRYPTONYM

Although the correspondence between Lynch's post-classical cinema and the lingering achievements of high modernist and expressionist painting is fairly self-evident, especi-

ally given his own artistic interest in Francis Bacon, Edward Hopper, and film noir, I would like to supplement this insight by drawing a less obvious and more historically-distant correspondence. Lynch's films share a tendency toward anamorphic disruption with the perspectival experiments of Renaissance and proto-Renaissance painting, principally those revolving around the anamorphic projection that emerged during the early mastering of linear perspective in the 15th and 16th centuries. An obsessive focus on Lynch's own destabilizing and anamorphic use of color in his films can further illustrate the relationship between Lynch the filmmaker and Lynch the painter. I am not interested in the typical cinematic types of visual distortion caused by anamorphic projection or anamorphic lenses. I am also not interested in examining his films for their obvious visual distortions (Frank Booth's distorted growling face in Jeffrey Beaumont's flashback in *Blue Velvet*, Fred Madison's distorted face when morphing into Pete Dayton in *Lost Highway* (1997), simulated projector malfunction when Betty and Rita leave Diane's apartment in *Mulholland Drive*, etc.), obvious sound distortions (backwards dialect of the Red Room in *Fire Walk with Me*, Frank's roar in *Blue Velvet*, Julee Cruise's singing voice, etc.), or the obvious anamorphic Möbius-strip narrative structures of *Lost Highway* and *Inland Empire*. Rather, I want to take anamorphosis in its literal, original meaning of "to shape again", in order to demonstrate how, much like the Renaissance and proto-Renaissance painters who utilized anamorphic disruption to capture the "quintessential magic" of painting[10] and to distort the order of realistic perspective, Lynch fetishizes the color blue to an extent that in his films its presence exceeds compositional and realist motivation. Through eccentric use of the color blue, he perversely disrupts the visual field of the narrative signified, and, thereby, creates a melancholic residue that reshapes the buried exhibitionist magic of cinema that was displaced with cinema's early adoption of a dominant narrative drive.[11] Lynch's films share an affinity with Renaissance experiments in perspectival disruption because, like the Renaissance painters and unlike the Modernists, he does not completely eschew the narrative signified; he just destabilizes its overwhelming hypnotic and ideological power from within. He bends and disrupts the norms of narrative signification rather than destroying them.[12] Like an anamorphic painter, he often uses the color blue to create an excessive image-within-the-image that effectively arrests the metonymic trajectory of his narratives from within their own diegetic space.[13] While I realize that my use of anamorphosis in understanding Lynch's use of blue might strike some as imprecise, the

concept conceptually allows me to show how Lynch's unnatural use of blue draws spectator attention away from the film's diegetic narrative by ironically exposing the artificiality of the diegesis, much in the way that Hans Holbein's anamorphic skull exposes the artificiality of the perspectively composed ambassadors in his famous painting.[14]

In his *Lives of the Artists*, Giorgio Vasari mentions the famous fly that the proto-Renaissance Florentine painter Giotto di Bondone surreptitiously painted on the nose of a human figure depicted on his apprenticing artist's painting while the latter was briefly out of town.[15] This fly effectively altered the focus of attention away from and disrupted the field of representation that the elder painter was at pains to establish in his painting. In his essay "Fly Films", Paul Harrill, indirectly drawing on Giotto's gag, explains that even though we all know that everything in a fictional film is staged, we disabuse ourselves of this knowledge in order to indulge in the field of representation created by a nicely-crafted dramatic narrative. Sometimes, however, "when a fly flies in through a window, the fiction flies out the window."[16] When an object in the image asserts itself in this accidental manner and attempts to hijack our "treasured narrative", we, as spectators, have two options: either wait for the fiction to return or embrace the chance disruption.[17] Rather than focus on this type of chance encounter in Lynch's films, however, I'd like to look at the color blue in his films as if it is that fly that draws spectator attention away from and disrupts the coherence of the field of narrative representation. I specifically want to focus on blue because Lynch uses this color as a cryptonym for melancholia, a psychological disorder that itself signifies a crisis in signification through an attachment to an unprocessed object along similar lines.

While *Eraserhead* (1976) is arguably the most melancholic film in Lynch's cinematic corpus, it was not until the introduction of color into his films that he was able to combine his enduring fixation (melancholia) with his favorite fetish (the color blue). As a visual motif, the color blue is used by Lynch to draw an affective affinity with melancholia because both hover at the margins of signification. Melancholia is characterized by a withdrawal from the symbolic system that guarantees meaning and that organizes reality, and color defies symbolic significance in visual art, according to Julia Kristeva, through an avoidance of censorship.[18] I utilize the modifier "fetish" here because, as a fetish, blue makes visible, makes brilliant and sublime, that lost object around which melancholia circulates.[19] Because the lost object of melancholia never actually existed, or exists only as

lost, blue functions in Lynch's films more like what Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, in their study of interminable mourning, refer to as a *cryptonym* than it does as a typical symbol or metaphor. Lynch's use of blue both conveys a cryptic meaning and emanates from the crypt that houses the melancholic who is physically still alive but already dead to this world. It, therefore, signifies not as a substitute for another object, as a symbol or metaphor would, but rather functions to demarcate an inhibition to signification itself, an antimetaphor: "the figure of the active destruction of representation."[20] It arises through an interminable mourning, and constitutes a "poetics born of the crypt" because it conveys the weight of the death drive of melancholia. A cryptonym's ultimate purpose, according to Abraham and Torok, is to fetishistically conceal and reveal the unspeakable gaping wound of melancholia.[21] As a fetish, the color blue in Lynch's films alters spectator attention away from the dominant field of representation by disrupting and inhibiting the ends of the narrative signified. Lynch simply makes visually literal the colorful allusion to the "blues" to signify an underlying bad humor in his films. From Dorothy's infamously fetishistic velvet dress in *Blue Velvet* and the enigmatic blue rose in *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* to the mystifying blue box and key in *Mulholland Drive*, he has always cryptically linked the color blue to the melancholic withdrawal from the realm of significance.

In her examination of color in the Padua and Assisi frescoes of the aforementioned 14th-century Florentine painter Giotto, Kristeva argues that color is the primary method whereby instinctual drives get translated into painting and the means whereby imagery decenters narrative convention. Giotto, she argues, utilized color to illustrate that a narrative signified (for him, Christian legend) cannot constrain the signifier. Since color escapes the censorship of signification, color provides a glimpse of "what is both extra- and anti-narrative" and provides a "process of liberation through and against the norm."[22] "It is through color", she claims, "that Western painting began to escape the constraints of narrative and perspective norm (as with Giotto) as well as representation itself (as with Cézanne, Matisse, Rothko, Mondrian)."[23] Color, in other words, "principally designates the pressure of the unconscious drive linked to (if not provoked by) objects."[24] Following the logic of her first book *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Kristeva sees color as indicating the semiotic drive within the visual field: "The chromatic apparatus, like rhythm for language, thus involves a shattering of meaning."[25] Drive, she further argues, emerges most forcefully and disturbingly in the color blue.[26] Following the studies of the Czech anatomist

and physiologist Johannes Purkinje, Kristeva concludes that since blue is perceived –only in the retina's periphery, it operates as a means to decenter the object's form, and since short wavelengths prevail in dim light, blue is the first color seen before sunrise. "Before sunrise" figures as the interval before the advent of castration and the attendant symbolic codification. Blue, as she concludes, returns "the subject to the archaic moment of its dialectic."[27] In these ways, blue indicates that which is in excess of the signified and that which is situated at the heart of melancholia: the Thing (*das Ding*). Elsewhere, Kristeva correlates *das Ding* with melancholia's drive toward symbolic collapse by referring to it as the "messenger of Thanatos."[28] Therefore, by using blue to fetishize certain objects or scenes in his films, Lynch, following Giotto, anamorphically creates a residual distortion in his image that remains excessive of the narrative signified and, thereby, skillfully bestows a certain painterly *dingnity* on his films that poetically evades any respective narrative ambition.[29] In psychoanalytic parlance, the Thing is that enigmatic pre-symbolic leftover to which the melancholic clings and which sustains the depressed state at the edge of significance.[30] Thus, through a psychoanalytic lens, I argue that Lynch's use of blue in his melancholic-toned films demarcates that moment in the field of narrative meaning that remains, much like the melancholic him or herself, detached from the field of the Other and, therefore, the field of significance and narrative meaning. Lynch's painterly use of blue anamorphically highlights that magical and unfathomable cinematic object that was lost with the codification of cinema into narrative.[31] By stripping Lynch's use of blue beyond and below its immediate narrative purpose, I am also hoping my interpretive desire to examine his films poetically—along their vertical axis instead of their narrative horizontal axis—proves fitting especially since the poetic is required to deliver the melancholic from an interminable and incomplete morning.[32]

BLUE VELVET

Lynch's 1986 masterpiece *Blue Velvet* theatrically begins (and ends) with a paratextual framing sequence providing the opening credits imposed over a swaying blue velvet curtain, encompassing the entire width of the screen. Later in the film, part of this proto-theatre curtain will twice emerge as a literal fetish object within the diegesis: first, as Dorothy's

blue robe and second, as the little piece of the robe that Frank carries throughout the film. Frank's little piece functions as a synecdoche for Dorothy's robe, and Dorothy's robe, in turn, functions as a synecdochal reminder of this larger opening paratextual image. As the film's diegetic fetish dominates the screen in this opening shot, it emphasizes the fetishistic nature of the film itself. Encompassing the entire screen furthermore highlights the nature of the fetish as a screen, a screen maintaining the illusion, as in Renaissance *trompe l'oeil*, that there is something real behind the screen. It reinforces the perverse method of disavowal of both the fetish and cinema spectatorship: "I know very well that mother does not have a penis, that the film narrative is fiction, but I will maintain the belief that she does, that the narrative is real." The fetish, the curtain that opens Lynch's film, stands for that which cannot be represented directly; it substitutes, in the words of Krips, "for that which is and must remain repressed."[33] Because this opening credit sequence lies on the paratextual plane, Lynch is able to comment on the entirety of his drama from a position that is paradoxically both from within and from without the film's diegesis, just like "a special instance of the *objet a*" that lies both within and without the desiring subject.[34] Essentially, he is saying that the content of *Blue Velvet* simultaneously disrupts narrative coherence and ironically reveals that the narrative is itself a distraction from this disruption. Like a fetish, the opening sequence functions as simultaneously a concealing and a revealing.

The fetish, as indicated above, also stands in for that which must remain repressed. Krips concludes that fetishism is a form of regression: "not a return to childish innocence, but rather a resurfacing of knowledge repressed in the transition to adulthood."[35] In this manner, the film's primary drama revolves around a return to the necessarily lost object, the object to which the melancholic clings. In the film's narrative, this is figured through a return to the pre-Oedipal scenario. Michel Chion and Slavoj Žižek have both convincingly argued how Dorothy Vallens and Frank Booth function as Jeffrey Beaumont's surrogate parents that mysteriously surface in Lumberton's underbelly once Jeffrey's real father collapses at the opening of the drama, a collapsing that effectively symbolizes the collapsing of the father function in Jeffrey's budding maturation process.[36] Interpreting the film along the avenue of what Jacques Lacan refers to as the other *jouissance*, Žižek also argues that "the enigma of women's depression" lies at the heart of the film.[37] While this argument is thoroughly convincing, Dorothy's obvious

melancholic symptoms could also be understood as a displacement of the melancholic condition that invades Jeffrey's being upon this initial loss of the *Nom-du-Père* (Name-of-the-Father). Mr. Beaumont's weakened physical state likewise weakens the No/Name-of-the-Father whose stability should have prevented Jeffrey from ever encountering the original lost object. Because this lost object is able to return, it emerges in the film's intra-psychic drama through the fantasy of the lonely, desiring mother. Once Jeffrey returns to town and discovers the severed ear, his existence, like the melancholic's, begins to split. For Jeffrey, this split plays out between a growing unreal social existence on the safe side of Lincoln Street and a real darker existence located on the other, seamy side of Lincoln. The first anamorphic element in the film that suggests the invasion of the real surfaces early in the film as Jeffrey walks over to Detective Williams's house to inquire about the investigation of the severed ear he found earlier that day. As Jeffrey is shown walking down the sidewalk, Lynch dissolves to a close-up of the dismembered ear, a shot that itself dramatically disrupts the film's diegetic narrative. The camera then enters the ear, the screen turns dark, and the soundtrack presents a non-diegetic rumbling, echoing sound, a sound Žižek appropriately claims is the echo of the Big Bang, the ultimate origin.[38] The camera remains between Jeffrey's ears until the second-to-last sequence of the film when it emerges from the other side of his head while he is lounging around in his backyard, thereby, signaling that the film's narrative is primarily focalized through Jeffrey's disintegrating psychic apparatus.[39]

Through an obsessed focus on and an interrogative reading of Lynch's use, accidental or not, of various shades of blue, the spectator can see how Lynch's fetish aligns with the perspective of his somewhat polymorphously perverted protagonist. Lynch's play with the color blue in the opening extra-diegetical credit sequence filters its way early into the diegesis. Immediately after the completion of the opening credit sequence, the film opens with a dissolve from the aforementioned blue curtain to the blue sky above the city of Lumberton, followed by a downward tilt to the idyllic flowers in front of the white picket fence. The deep-blue hue of the robe here gives way to the slightly less deep blue of the deep sky above to the lighter blue of the sky on the horizon, all in tune with Bobby Vinton's version of "Blue Velvet." The world of Lumberton, it seems, is one that tries to keep its blues lightened up. Even on the city's welcoming billboard, the painted blue sky in the background is partially covered with the ironic word "happy."

Similarly, the original establishing shot of the Lumberton police station splits the screen in half with the police station building representing the law being pushed to the right half of the screen by a vibrant blue sky, an apt visual metaphor for Jeffrey's internal psychic battle between the law of the father and the forbidden desire of the mother. To extend this metaphor, the city map on the wall inside the police station (an actual map of Wilmington, NC where the film was shot) shows the phallic peninsula of the city pinned in by blue water on both sides (the Atlantic Ocean on one side and the aptly named Cape Fear River on the other).

In these early sequences of the film, however, the use of the color blue could not be said to be yet overdetermined by the film's mood or yet more than just a coincidence. However, once blue enters the more designed aspects of the diegesis—the Pabst Blue Ribbon beer logo and the Benjamin Moore Paint logo at Beaumont's Hardware—the color begins to take on a significance perpendicular to the film's narrative. When Jeffrey takes his evening walk to the Williams's house, he passes one of those uncanny Lynchian characters walking his dog. Not only is the strange figure dressed completely in dark blue clothing, but this is the last scene before the camera enters the diegetically uncanny severed ear that inaugurates the film's intra-psychic drama. From here, blue seems to multiply in significance on the other, seamier side of Lincoln Street and specifically in the environs around Dorothy, the "Blue Lady." When Jeffrey and Sandy plot to gain access to Dorothy's apartment in the Deep River Apartment building, Jeffrey disguises himself as a bug exterminator by dressing in dark-blue coveralls. As Jeffrey and Sandy scout Dorothy's apartment building from across the street, a woman dressed in a blue shirt walks past the building in one direction, and a car with a highly noticeable bright blue license plate passes in the opposing direction. Additionally, a blue light also hangs above the entrance to the seventh floor on the fire escape stairwell, all as if to warn Jeffrey of the collapsing symbolic law within.

Even though Jeffrey's father's collapse signifies the collapsing symbolic realm, the lifting of repression, and the emergence of the film's melancholic mood, melancholia's crypt surfaces most measurably in the heart of the Deep River Apartments. Dorothy's apartment, the setting of the most perverted Oedipal scenes within the film, is suitably the only set used that was constructed expressly for the film. Every other set used in the film is a found location. The interior of Dorothy's apartment, however, was constructed off site at the DEG studios in Wilmington (now EUE Screen Gems). Everything about

this set is, therefore, staged, including the voyeuristic primal scene when Jeffrey hides in the closet. Recognition of Dorothy's apartment as the heart of Lumberton's hidden melancholic underbelly explains the choice of the organ-colored faux finish on the walls and the darkened wood furniture and doors scattered throughout the apartment. Humeral theory allegorically suggests that the scenes in Dorothy's apartment take place inside a spleen, the physiological organ that houses the black bile whose excess results in a melancholic condition in the first place. But Dorothy's apartment also functions as the navel of Jeffrey's intrapsychic narration, amounting to what Abraham and Torok refer to as "a sealed-off psychic place, a crypt in the ego […], a mechanism whereby the assimilation of both the illegitimate idyll and its loss are precluded."[40] Following the logic of the endocryptic identification that befalls a melancholic, Jeffrey incorporates the lost object and indulges in what Abraham and Torok call a crypto-fantasy: "The mechanism consists of exchanging one's own identity for a fantasmic identification with the 'life'—beyond the grave—of an object of love, lost as a result of some metapsychological traumatism."[41] This is the impossible place where Jeffrey encounters and indulges his surrogate mother's excessive incestuous desire (his idyll) and stumbles upon his weakened, impotent father, a surrogate father whose weakness is betrayed by his sheer outlandish, hyperbolic, and comically-excessive show of full potency (which should instill loss). When the bile of Dorothy's habitat is initially unleashed by the paternal collapse, a melancholic hue exceeds this highly artificial crypt and paints a noticeable patina onto the rest of the diegesis. The film's concluding image provides one last glimpse at the film's narrative excess. Sitting on a park bench and hugging her rescued child, Dorothy's reasonable grin slowly and incongruously transforms into an ambivalent melancholic frown as the camera tilts back up to the opening blue sky and reverses its original dissolve onto the bookending blue velvet curtain, all the while accompanied by Isabella Rossellini's much more melancholic rendering of "Blue Velvet." The lost object even invades and disrupts the narrative's conventional happy ending. In *Blue Velvet*, Lynch's use of blue often still functions rather diegetically and, therefore, does not throw the film's narrative too far off track. However, Lynch's similar use of blue as a cryptonym possesses an even stronger anti-narrative dimension in his 1992 prequel *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*.

FIRE WALK WITH ME

With his *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*, Lynch creates a cinematic prequel, similarly loosening the normal constraints against the expelled and repressed melancholic excesses. This time the repressed aspects of Laura Palmer's narrative that were censored and excluded from network television are directly staged. Ask every fan of the original ABC television program *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991), and they will tell you how nonsensical Lynch's 1992 cinematic prequel is. Its senselessness stems from the film's withdrawal of the television serial's object investments. Since the film's storyline takes place chronologically prior to the television show's mystery, and since the spectator of the film already knows about the inevitable loss of Laura Palmer, the film melancholically anticipates the loss around which the entire television show revolves. It actually presents the very object on which the television show relied on as lost in order to maintain the show's semblance of a dramatic narrative. *Fire Walk with Me*, therefore, stems from an unfinished mourning process. The entirety of the *Twin Peaks* universe could be understood through the guise of melancholia, a condition where the absent object is rendered obliquely present as the Thing. The fiasco of a funeral that is held for Laura Palmer in Episode 3 "Rest in Pain" from the original *Twin Peaks* testifies to the failure of the mourning ritual and the town's concomitant inability to re-suture the gap in the socio-symbolic, diegetic space originally opened by the violation of the incest prohibition. Laura's death is never adequately signified since her murder is too prematurely solved and, consequently, never adequately mourned by the original television show. Likewise, *Fire Walk*'s narrative distortion and dismantling of *Twin Peaks* could be understood as stemming from the premature solving of Laura's murder in the original television program since the original show abandoned her memory too quickly in the second half of the second season. Since melancholia is premised "on the absence of an object that is symptomatically felt as present",[42] *Fire Walk* lifts the lid on repression by returning to the lost object on which the melancholic circulates: Laura Palmer.

The distortion of the *Twin Peaks* narrative diegesis begins with the first shot of *Fire Walk with Me*. The film's opening paratextual credit sequence, just like in *Blue Velvet*, is displayed over a completely blue screen accompanied by a bluesy melancholic score. As the camera imperceptibly tracks back, the blue movie screen is eventually revealed to be anamorphotic static emanating from a television screen. The transfer of the Twin Peaks

universe from the small screen of television to the big screen is completed as the television gets violently demolished by a sledge hammer in this opening scene. Lynch indicates immediately that *Fire Walk* destroys the telenovela police procedural format of *Twin Peaks* with this close-up image of a television set being violently destroyed. This opening image blends the diegetic crime scene where Leland Palmer kills his first victim Teresa Banks and Lynch's own metaphorical extra-diegetic critique of the limitations of *Twin Peaks* the television show. Because the television show is figuratively put to rest by this opening shot, the prequel film refuses to commit the television show's crime of repression, namely, the burial of Laura Palmer. The initial distortion of the extreme close-up shot of the blue television static in this opening scene also indicates that in the battle between coherent narrative and the narrative disruption caused by a melancholic mood, the film will side with the latter's attempt to lift the screen of repression. This initial distorted image is produced by a too proximate relation to the object, just as getting too close to the lost object of *Twin Peaks*—Laura Palmer—understandably provides viewers of *Fire Walk* with a distorted narrative, often too dissonant to cognitively digest. Since the film actually begins with an anamorphic image, it signals that the film's narrative runs secondary to its melancholic mood. Most of the elements in Lynch's prequel, therefore, would seem to be propelled by mood, instead of by the usual motivating factors like compositional unity, realism, artistry, or transtextual reference. David Bordwell calls film narratives governed by this rare type of motivation "parametric" narratives. In a parametric narrative, "the film's stylistic system creates patterns distinct from the demands of the syuzhet system."[43] In these films, stylistics, including mood and sound, usually plays a stronger role in the film than narration, thereby, partially liberating the film from codified narrative form. Everyone knows that a static-filled television screen does not really appear blue. However, this opening shot from *Fire Walk* appears blue only because of the anamorphic distortion caused by the camera's over-proximate position to its object. The blue signifies the residual, incomplete mourning emanating from the television show, an incomplete mourning that haunts and disturbs the prequel's narration. Here, Lynch makes the decision to introduce thematically the equivalence between the color blue and object anamorphosis. This opening image, therefore, demarcates the fetish in the sense that the film will refuse to follow up on the spectator's desire for more *Twin Peaks* and, instead, will take a dive into the murky waters

of melancholia where desire ceases to function. In *Fire Walk*, the impediment to narrative desire is thus dramatized.

In a certain sense, the entirety of *Fire Walk*'s diegesis takes place between two deaths, in the Lacanian sense of the phrase.[44] Just like the melancholic who is biologically alive but dead to this world, Laura Palmer is alive in the diegesis of the film, but, because of the film's unique position as a prequel, she is already dead. Every spectator watching the film knows this, and this fact lends to the film's melancholic and enigmatic tone. This fact also prevents Lynch from including any of the up-lifting whimsy that was so prevalent and widely appealing in the television serial. The only scene in the film that shows a modicum of levity is also one of the more enigmatic scenes: Lil's senseless pantomime sequence in front of Agents Cole, Desmond, and Stanley on the airport tarmac. Lil delivers a coded message through her actions, dress, and positioning. All of her seemingly enigmatic codes are subsequently decoded by Agents Desmond and Stanley in the following scene except the meaning behind the unnatural blue rose Lil wears on her lapel. During their interpretative discussion in the car, Lynch cuts to a slow-motion close up of the blue rose. Here, as with the edit to the disembodied ear in *Blue Velvet*, a marginal piece of the previous scene's imagery centrally dominates the complete field of vision, eventually spreading its contagion across the entire enigmatic diegesis itself. Without meaning, the blue rose functions as a cryptonym. Rather than whimsically embodying some substitute or displaced meaning, as the rest of Lil's bizarre gestures and clothing do, it entombs meaning as it designifies through its refusal to participate in the signifying system as such. The normal routes and cues of cinematic narrative communication are, at least, partially suspended throughout the film. This is prefigured in Lil's own inability to communicate directly and in the reversed linguistic utterances used by the Man from Another Place in the Red Room. Much like the melancholic who spurns the Other—the symbolic realm where meaning is conveyed and received—the blue rose emanates from a wound or a loss that cannot be signified. Lynch, therefore, leaves the blue rose enigmatic and as a signifier of the enigmatic itself, as he does most of the film's use of blue.[45]

The use of blue throughout the film seems less accidental and, ironically, more significant under these circumstances. The blue background of Laura Palmer's Homecoming photo and the blue ink she uses in her diary seem less realistically motivated than stylistically illustrating what is behind her often nonsensical behavior. The inexplicable "T"

Agent Stanley finds under the fingernail of Teresa Banks's corpse is also in blue font type face. The blinking on-and-off blue light at Hap's Diner in the Deer Meadow portion of the narrative replicates the type of electronic short-circuiting the filmmaker often uses stylistically to indicate a breakdown in communicative meaning, which, in this case, results from the lifting of repression that itself is a consequence of the violation of the incest prohibition positioned at the center of the drama. This is not to suggest that the blinking on and off blue light symbolizes incest, but, rather, to suggest that it results from the breakdown in significance inaugurated by the violation of the incest taboo. If it symbolizes anything, then it symbolizes the failure of symbolization itself. Further, Laura's father, the cause of her melancholic condition, drives a blue car and BOB, the personified violation of the incest prohibition, creeps into Laura's artificially blue-light-drenched bedroom at night completely decked in a blue denim outfit. At the Roadhouse, Julee Cruise performs one of her melancholic songs, "Questions in a World of Blue", echoing the lines, "How can a heart so filled with love start to cry […] how can love die." Later in the club in Canada, Lynch's own song "Blue Frank" reverberates to a blue strobe light so loud in the foreground that it anamorphically distorts natural communication to the point that character dialog in the scene must be subtitled. Often, an otherworldly, extra-diegetic blue spot light randomly rains on top of Laura, painting her existence in a melancholic crypt. By the very end of the film, in the Red Room after Laura's murder, Laura is shown seated next to a table with a small blue-lit lamp in the shape of the planet Saturn. Because Saturn has long been recognized for its metonymic affiliation with melancholia, the Red Room's little Saturn lamp is overdetermined by the film's melancholic use of blue throughout the film.[46] Taken together, these blue elements disrupt the film's narrative coherence and emphasize a non-signified excess haunting the film from within, an excess that approximates the proximity of the Thing for the melancholic.

MULHOLLAND DRIVE

Like *Blue Velvet*, *Mulholland Drive* is also primarily driven by an intrapsychic mode of narration; only, in this film, the diegesis is clearly oneiric in nature. The first roughly three-quarters of the film dramatizes Diane Selwyn's wish-fulfilling escape from the brutal and

melancholic world that emerges in the latter part of the film after she wakes from her made-for-Hollywood dream state. The majority of the dream portion of the film's narration stages enough of the condensations and displacements that characterize the dream-work's distortion of Diane's waking residue to please even the most dogmatic Freudian. For instance, Diane's desire for a successful Hollywood acting career gets condensed in the dream portion of the film's narrative into Betty's remarkable studio audition, her unrequited lover's identity conveniently gets displaced onto a two-bit mob-backed actress, and even Diane's dreaming self gets displaced onto a customer at Winkie's who recalls a horrible nightmare to his dining companion. Characters like Coco (the manager of the Havenhurst Apartments), Joe (the inept criminal), and the Cowboy are all disguised enough in the dream sequence of the film by Diane's internal censor to avoid revealing the role they play in her waking life.[47]

Since Freud thought that one purpose of dreaming was to fulfill a wish (the other, of course, was to continue sleep), he thought of it as a childish act that temporally satisfies the pleasure principle. Lacan, on the other hand, according to Ellie Ragland, saw a dream wish as indicating an elemental absence. As Ragland puts it: "Lacan hypothesized that sleep was a way to prolong a dream, not in order to maintain a state of pleasure, but to hold on to a state between consciousness and unconsciousness where one can defer a displeasure to be encountered in waking life."[48] As with Diane's dream in *Mulholland Drive*, the dreamer "denies the reality of a future displeasure by disguising the something lacking."[49] Diane's wish-fulfilling dream functions in Lynch's film as a form of repression, a means of representation that strives for unity. Lynch, therefore, uses this first part of the film, the dream-work, as itself a metonymy for the typical productions of the Hollywood dream factory. His film's title, *Mulholland Drive*, not only references Lynch's own favorite classical film *Sunset Boulevard*, but the latter Los Angeles street figures as the dividing line between those whose Hollywood dreams come true and those whose do not. The Hollywood in-crowd lives north of Sunset, up on prestigious Mulholland Drive, while those who come to Los Angeles seeking their dream, only to fail, end up waiting tables at Winkie's south of Sunset. Diane's dream as the more Hollywood part of the film, therefore, strives for a unity and narrative coherence that is itself based on a repressed melancholic object, one that emerges from rejection and failure.

However, even though much of the film's latent meaning can be made manifest by unraveling the distortions of the dream-work through interpretation, Lynch still manages to use the color blue to highlight those portions of the narrative that, like the naval of the dream that Freud encountered in the dream of Irma's injection, remain not just resistant to interpretation but actively draw attention away from any narrative signified and unity that the dream-work seems at such pains to establish and maintain.[50] He uses blue to indicate those portions of the film and the dream narrative that emerge at the limits of narrative signification. As Ragland claims, when something cannot be fully represented, "repression momentarily lapses."[51] Blue highlights that part of the image, that moment of the narrative "that stands in for the lack in the image and breaks up all illusions of unity, a linearity of narrative, or a well-made up subjectivity of perception."[52] It is the means by which Lynch inscribes into the narrative those instinctual drive residues that have not been symbolized. These are the elements that prevent his film from succumbing fully to the Hollywood narrative norm.

Although there exist many mysteries in the first section of the film (Who is Rita? Where did she get all of the money in her handbag? Why was she targeted on Mulholland Drive? Who is Diane Selwyn? etc.), the mystery surrounding the enigmatic blue key discovered in Rita's handbag remains the film's naval, an unplumbable mystery. It is not the key to the mystery except in the sense that it is the film's cryptonym, a signifier that points to the film's inability to fully communicate and to be fully interpreted. Even though Betty finds the blue box (the lost object) in her purse to which the key fits, the content of the box, upon Rita's opening of it, appears empty. The blue key (and its blue box) signify the emptiness around which Betty/Diane's entire puzzling narrative revolves. Narratives in general attempt to cover the fundamental loss that lies at the heart of the signifying system, but Lynch's melancholic narrative highlights this loss by leaving a blue patina on numerous sequences and scenes throughout the film. The Mulholland Drive and Sunset Boulevard street signs are not only shown in the customary blue color of Los Angeles street signs, but Lynch always shows them shining through an added blue spot light, painting them with added *dingnity*. Even the utopic palm trees of Los Angeles are bathed in blue light as Rita runs down the street at night early in the film, highlighting the troubled side of the Hollywood dream. Betty's aunt's apartment is conspicuously bereft of

blue, except for the appropriate blue suitcases Betty brings from Deep River, Ontario, a city name that is itself a residue from *Blue Velvet*.

Lynch's use of blue to signify melancholia's extra-narrative presence and to lend a sense of *dingnity* to a scene is nowhere more evident than in the late night visit Betty and Rita make to Club *Silencio*. Lynch reserves his signature in-an-out-of-focus handheld camera for shooting the taxi trek to the downtown back-alley club. Along with the rain-soaked windshield of the taxi, the anamorphic distortion of the image indicates a trek to the outskirts of the realm of the Other. The club scene represents the section of the dream sequence that is most incoherent with regards to the rest of the narrative leading up to this point. It is the place where the dream comes closest to the lost object. From the outside, the club name appears above the front door in a neon blue light as full blue light emanates from within the club itself. Figuratively, the lost object of melancholia, personified through the fast-tracking forward camera dolly, quickly follows Betty and Rita into the club. The club itself is set up as the crypt of melancholia. Not only does Rebekah Del Rio perform a very melancholic Spanish version of "Crying" on the club's stage, but the club is overcome by stormy blue lightening as Betty is overcome with convulsions. All the while a mystifying *Ancien Régime* character billed as the "Blue-Haired Lady" observes from the balcony. Because this mystifying character does not fit comfortably into the narrative signified, she personifies the color blue's narrative excess. Also, the Magician's opening performance meta-textually indicates how the entire film's narrative is all an illusion, an illusion that is failing at repressing melancholic loss, a failure that derails and disrupts the desired narrative. The "*Silencio*" that the Blue-Haired Lady whispers at the conclusion of the film obliquely references that Thing in the film that exceeds the narrative signified and can only be *dingnified* by the color blue.

CONCLUSION

Focusing obsessively on David Lynch's strategic deployment of blue in his films illustrates his instinctual painterly technique while simultaneously showcasing the anti-narrative pulse flowing under in his otherwise conventional-looking films. Ultimately, Lynch's use of blue in his films less signifies any specific or general meaning than it lends significance to non-meaning by visually rendering a caesura in narrative coherence. It is the most noticea-

ble way his films cathect their narrative with drive, with that which usually remains decathected in a film with a unified narrative structure. As with Roland Barthes's third or obtuse meaning, blue, for Lynch, serves no purely narrative function. It "cannot be conflated with the simple existence of the scene, it exceeds the copy of the referential motif."[53] It also compels, Barthes would conclude, the type of interrogative reading outlined here. Once Lynch entitles his first truly Lynchian color film *Blue Velvet*, every blue element in his films (costume, décor, lighting, soundtrack lyrics, dialog, etc.) is colored with a brilliant residue and made to stand out in excess of the film's unified narrative structure, lending these elements a certain *dingnity*. Blue functions as a partially extra-diegetic element that, like the shot of the disembodied ear, the cut away to the blue rose, or the Blue-Haired Lady's "*Silencio*", disturbs the film's unifying structure from within. Although Kristin Thompson argues that "no one ever watches *only* these nondiegetic aspects of the image", paying obsessive attention to them bestows on them the same effect as Giotto's fly: disruption of the narrative structure through the introduction of sensory excess.[54] In this way, Lynch manages to inject his repressed painterly spirit into narrative cinema and provide an anamprohic glimpse of what was visually lost to cinema by the narrative take-over of the Hollywood dream factory.

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1. Robert Finlay, "Weaving the Rainbow: Visions of Color in World History", *Journal of World History* 18, no. 4 (2007): 401, 403.

2. While many viewers might see Lynch's cinematic narratives as the opposite of Hollywood cinema, his films are, according to Miklós Kiss and Steven Willensen, actually quite indebted to the "cognitive and habitualized dispositions" created by classical film narration. *Impossible Puzzle Films: A Cognitive Approach to Contemporary Complex Cinema* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 181. Lynch's narratives are definitely complex and even curve the classical narrative space, but they never truly break it. To use a Freudian term, Lynch's films display an ambivalence toward the classical Hollywood narrative style. Even the complex and confusing narratives of *Lost Highway* and *Mulholland Drive* can be naturalized through an interpretive awareness of distorted subjective focalization. (*Inland Empire* might be an exception.) This is not to conclude that his films cannot be understood as a critique of the Hollywood norms. They just make their critique from within and at the margins, often directly pitting the norm against its own limitations in each film. This is also not to reduce a film as complex and as artistic as *Mulholland Drive* to the same base level as Ron Howard's highly commercial 2001 film *A Beautiful Mind*, but it is to point out that both films garnered a "Best Direction" nomination by the 2002 Academy. See also Matthew Campora, *Subjective Realist Cinema: From Expressionism to* Inception (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 62, 75. I also realize that my claim about Lynch's film's apparent debt to classical narration is, at least, partially the product of an interpretive maneuver that, borrowing the words of Warren Buckland, reduces "dissonance by trying to fit" Lynch's films "into a classical narrative schema in order to render them more intelligible." "Ambiguity, Ontological Pluralism, and Cognitive Dissonance in the Hollywood Puzzle Film", in *Hollywood Puzzle Films*, ed. Warren Buckland (New York: Routledge, 2014), 13. I would also like to add that, within William Earle's typology, Lynch's films utilize the ingredients of all three types of films that revolt against the dominant dramatic realism of commercial cinema: the sensory, the ironic, and the surrealist, borrowing mostly from the latter since Lynch in most interested in exposing the uncanny latency within the recognizable. "Revolt Against Realism in the Films", in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, 3rd Ed, ed. Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 31-41.

3. Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 24.

4. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959-1960*, trans. Dennis Porter (New York: Norton, 1992), 118.

5. Kristeva, *Black Sun*, 161.

6. For more on melancholia's relation to the "unprocessed" and the "unsymbolized", see Charles Shepardson, *Lacan and the Limits of Language* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 81-100.

7. Just as Sigmund Freud claimed that the fetish "made its appearance in analysis as a subsidiary finding", Lynch's use of blue in his films is subsidiary to the dominance of the narratives. He only obliquely calls attention to its significance. "Fetishism", in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XXI, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1964), 152, 153.

8. Henry Krips, *Fetish: An Erotics of Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 4. Constance Penley similarly argues, "The fetishist attempts to substitute the rules of his own desire for the culturally predominant ones." "The Avant-Garde and Its Imaginary", in *Movies and Methods: An Anthology*, Vol. II, ed. Bill Nichols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 596.

9. While most films canonized under the rubric of Hollywood's new complex cinema promote narrative structures that have adapted to the progressive possibilities of the new media and its digital technology as well as to the newer discourses ranging from chaos/complex theory, game theory, and systems theory to fractal geometry and, even, nonequilibrium thermodynamics, Lynch's dissonant narratives seem to originate from a regressive, rather than progressive, pulsion. The dissonant nature of the narrative structures of many of Lynch's films stems more from their fixation on a lost pre-narrativized object and less from a post-modern or post-classical experimentation with the out-dated structure of classical narration. For a sample understanding of contemporary complex cinema's relation to the technologies of the new media (CGI, digitization), their concomitant thematic (virtual reality, parallel universes, interactivity) and the discourses of cybernetics and mathematics, see Marsha Kinder, "Hot Spots, Avatars, and Narrative Fields Forever: Bunuel's Legacy for New Digital Media and Interactive Database Narrative", *Film Quarterly* 55, no. 4 (2002): 2-15, Wendy Everett, "Fractal Films and the Architecture of Complexity", *Studies in European Cinema* 2, no. 3 (2005): 159-171, Garrett Stewart, *Framed Time: Toward a Postfilmic Cinema* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), Allan Cameron, *Modular Narratives in Contemporary Cinema* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), and Maria Poulaki, "Puzzled Hollywood and the Return of Complex Films", in *Hollywood Puzzle Films*, ed. Warren Buckland (New York: Routledge , 2014), 35-53.

10. Jurgis Baltrušaitis, *Anamorphic Art* (Cambridge, MA: Chadwych Healey, 1977) quoted in Sheldon Richmond, "*Anamorphic Art* [Review]", *Leonardo* 13, no. 1 (1980): 75.

11. According to Tom Gunning, the exhibitionist and presentational tendency of early cinema was largely eliminated in the early years of the industry through its adoption of the voyeuristic and representational nature of transparent narrative. "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator, and the Avant-Garde", in *Critical Visions in Film Theory: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, ed. Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011), 70-76. Since melancholia is characterized by a return to an unfinished mourning and to an inability to makes sense within given symbolic coordinates, Lynch creates a painterly and poetic vision of melancholia in order to highlight his films' desire to return to something that has been lost to cinema, figured in his film's inability to make coherent sense within the given coordinates of narrative comprehension. To paraphrase Freud, Lynch's films display a certain amount of regression through identification with this abandoned object; thus, the shadow of the object falls upon his films' visual field. "Mourning and Melancholia", *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XIV, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), 249.

12. For a distinction between the more modernist distancing effects of Jean-Luc Godard's films and Lynch's unique brand of excessive normality, see Todd McGowan, *The Impossible David Lynch* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 5-20.

13. Drawing attention to certain diegetic objects through an emphasis on their unnatural blueness, Lynch anamorphically draws attention away from his films' central narratives. My use of anamorphosis here is anamorphically derived from Jacques Lacan's examination of anamorphosis and its distortion of the given visual field in Hans Holbein's 1533 painting *The Ambassadors*. In his analysis, Holbein's anamorphic skull skulking at the bottom of the painting cannot be recognized without a temporary eliding of the ambassadors' narrative, which constitutes the ostensible signified of the painting. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977), 85-89. Holbein's specific use of anamorphosis is rooted in anamorphing only a part of the overall image much like contemporary complex puzzle films' use of camouflaged elements that, once exposed, flip their narratives by revealing, what Edward Branigan claims, is hidden or latent within "conventional configurations." "Butterfly Effects Upon a Spectator", in *Hollywood Puzzle Films*, ed. Warren Buckland (New York: Routledge, 2014), 234.

14. Jay David Grusin and Richard Bolter have equated Renaissance linear perspective to Hollywood dramatic realism as both are devoted to immediacy and transparency in their representation of reality. *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 24. In this manner, Lynch's use of blue aligns itself with Holbein's skull: both tend to disrupt, distort, and send the death knell to any lasting designs of immediacy and transparency in their ostensible narratives. Blue functions as Lynch's morphed artistic signature, his trademark, just as Holbein's signature is captured in the anamorhed skull: Holbein literally means "hollow bone."

15. Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1991), 35.

16. Paul Harrill, "Fly Films", *Blimp* 38 (1998), 20-2, quoted in Krips, *Fetish*, 97.

17. Ibid.

18. In her study of Giotto's frescoes, Julia Kristeva aligns color with the primary processes as a mode of thing-presentation that only enters the realm of meaningful representation when hypercathected to the secondary process of word-presentation. This Freudian split between perception and thought process illustrates how color "escapes censorship" and how "the unconscious irrupts" into "culturally coded pictorial distribution." She adds, "contrary to delineated form and space, as well as to drawing and composition subjected to the strict codes of representation and verisimilitude, color enjoys considerable freedom." *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, trans. Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 220.

19. Freud maintains that the fetish substitutes for that which does not or no longer exists. It replaces lack with some idiosyncratically associated object. It simultaneously disavowals and affirms castration. "Fetishism", 156. In this way, when the color blue is attached to a diegetic object in Lynch's melancholic films, it simultaneously disavowals and affirms a lack of coherence in the diegetic narrative of which it is a part.

20. Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 132.

21. Abraham and Torok, *Shell and Kernel*, 142.

22. Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, 214, 215.

23. Ibid., 221. The distinction that Kristeva makes here between Giotto's break with narrative norms and Matisse and Rothko's more drastic modernist break with representation itself illustrates well why Lynch's cinema shares a stronger affinity with the former painter.

24. Ibid., 217.

25. Ibid., 221.

26. Allister Mactaggart also references Kristeva's essay on Giotto in his enlightening study of Lynch, only he doesn't pursue or even mention the importance of the color blue in Lynch's films. *The Film Paintings of David Lynch: Challenging Film Theory* (Bristol: Intellect, 2010), 28, 38.

27. Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, 225.

28. Kristeva, *Black Sun,* 20.

29. The neologism *dingnity* comes from Paul-Laurent Assoun through Viviana M. Saint-Cyr, "Creating a Void or Sublimation in Lacan", *Research in Psychoanalysis* 13 (June 2012): 14-21.

30. According to Lacan, the Thing demarcates the primordial lost object, only existing as lost: "It is in its nature that the object as such is lost." He also claims, "*Das Ding* is that which I will call the beyond-of-the-signified." *Seminar VII*, 52, 54.

31. The numerous relatively subtle references to *The Wizard of Oz* that are littered throughout *Blue Velvet*, for instance, allude to some lost magical cinematic object. I am not trying to argue that as a filmmaker Lynch is attempting to return to some type of early film technology or the look of silent cinema or something similar. His ambivalent praise of the modern digitization of filmmaking is well documented. I am suggesting that his narrative films are peppered with elements that arrest their narrative coherence in such a way that a poetic alternative to narrative can be glimpsed. In this manner, his films leave a trace of what could have been, what was lost when cinema was co-opted by storytelling. Lynch's "shaping again" of the magical potential of cinema is something closer to what Dietrich Scheunemann sees as early Expressionist cinema's "presentation of the invisible, the uncanny and the eerie." "Activating the Differences: Expressionist Film and Early Weimar Cinema", in *Expressionist Film: New Perspectives*, ed. Dietrich Scheunemann (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2003), 13. For Lynch's use of early film technology, see his 1995 short *Premonition Following an Evil Deed* in the anthology film *Lumière and Company*.

32. Elizabeth Wright, *Speaking Desires Can Be Dangerous: The Poetics of the Unconscious* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1999), 40.

33. Krips, *Fetish*, 7.

34. Ibid., 9.

35. Ibid., 23.

36. Michel Chion, *David Lynch*, trans. Robert Julian (London: British Film Institute, 1995), 91-93 and Slavoj Žižek, *The Metastasis of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Woman and Causality* (London: Verso, 1994), 113-136.

37. Žižek, *Metastasis*, 119.

38. Ibid., 115.

39. For the connection between a waning Oedipus and the waning of narrative, see Juliet Flower MacCannell, "Oedipus Wrecks: Lacan, Stendhal and the Narrative Form of the Real", *MLN* 98, no. 5 (1983): 910-940.

40. Abraham and Torok, *Shell and Kernel*, 141. Even though Dorothy's apartment is on the seventh floor of the Deep River Apartment building, the building actually only has six floors, essentially indicating that her apartment is not really located within normal symbolic parameters.

41. Ibid., 142.

42. Sanjan Bahun, *Modernism and Melancholia: Writing as Countermourning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 55.

43. David Bordwell, *Narration in Fiction Film* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 275. "Syuzhet" is the Russian Formalist term for narrative plot.

44. Lacan, *Seminar VII*, 319-324.

45. In Lynch's 2017 *Twin Peaks: The Return*, the Blue Rose is revealed as designating a special FBI investigative unit tasked with interrogating special enigmatic cases. This revelation metatextually demarcates Lynch's films themselves as Blue Rose cases.

46. For Saturn's symbolic association with melancholia, see Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion, and Art* (London: Nelson & Sons, 1964).

47. For a more detailed account of condensation and displacement in *Mulholland Drive*, see Jay R. Lentzner and Donald R. Ross, "The Dream That Blisters Sleep: Latent Content and Cinematic Form in *Mulholland Drive*", *American Imago* 62, no. 1 (2005): 101-123.

48. Ellie Ragland, "Lacan, the Death Drive, and the Dream of the Burning Child", in *Death and Representation*, ed. Sarah Webster Goodwin and Elizabeth Bronfen (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 91.

49. Ibid.

50. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Avon Books, 1965), 143, 564.

51. Ragland, "Lacan", 93.

52. Ibid.

53. Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 53.

54. Kristin Thompson, "The Concept of Cinematic Excess", in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*, ed. Philip Rosen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 33.