S/Z/COOPER/COOPER:
Barthes with *Twin Peaks: The Return*

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In Honoré de Balzac's 1830 novella *Sarrasine*, the eponymous protagonist falls in love with a castrato disguised as a woman, La Zambinella, whom he conceives as an icon of perfect femininity. Roland Barthes' brilliant extended analysis of this tale, published 140 years later, is titled *S/Z*; the two letters connote Sarrasine and La Zambinella, as well as the sexual difference evoked by Sarrasine's name, which 'will be obvious to any French-speaking person, since that language automatically takes the final "e" as a specifically feminine linguistic property, particularly in the case of a proper name whose masculine form (*Sarrazin*) exists in French onomastics'.[1] Sarrasine desires La Zambinella; he also doubles her / him in that both characters effect a mingling of gendered attributes. Sarrasine's name renders him partially feminine; *S/Z* thus conveys a difference *within* as well as between. Such deconstructive logic is also registered visually: Barthes' title presents the 'S' and the 'Z' divided by a slash, in such a way that they appear as imperfect reflections of each other, similar but different, almost but not quite symmetrical.[2] This mirroring and doubling, within and without, places *Sarrasine* in the wider domain of those '[d]ualistic fictions', as Karl Miller has described them, characterised by 'generic idiosyncrasy', which 'impart experiences of duplication, division, dispersal, abeyance'.[3] One such fiction – whose generic idiosyncrasy is surely beyond question – is *Twin Peaks*, the American television series created by Mark Frost and David Lynch, whose original run extended to two seasons (1990-91) and a cinematic prequel, *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992).[4] The closing image of the second season may, indeed, evoke the visual semi-mirroring of Barthes' title. Having emerged from the other-dimensional 'Black Lodge', discovered to be the source of hitherto unexplained activity within the town of Twin Peaks and accessed by a portal in the woods, the boyish and charming FBI Agent Dale Cooper awakens in his hotel room watched over by two friends. They do not know, as we do, that Cooper was chased and seemingly overwhelmed by his white-eyed doppelgänger in that peculiar other world. Having confessed a desire to clean his teeth in an unsettlingly dead tone of voice,

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'Cooper' locks himself in the bathroom and squeezes toothpaste onto his brush. Suddenly he begins to decorate the sink with it, and headbutts the mirror. We see, in the smashed surface, that his reflection is no longer that of Agent Cooper but of the possessing demon (or symbol) known only by the palindromic designator 'Bob'.[5]

Thus, for over two decades, ended a series which began with the investigation of the murdered schoolgirl Laura Palmer (Sheryl Lee) and gradually metamorphosed into something uniquely strange. Cooper's investigation revealed a sordid underground of corruption, drugs, underage prostitution, gangsterism and incest in the idyllic North-West town, as well as the presence of supernatural entities – Bob, his pursuer 'Mike', the seemingly helpful Giant, a grandmother and her grandson known alternatively as the Chalfonts or Tremonds, and the ambiguous 'Man from Another Place' – associated with the Black Lodge in which Cooper was finally imprisoned as his doppelgänger roamed free.[6] Statements by Lynch and Frost led no one to expect a continuation. However, following a surprising announcement in 2014, an 18-part sequel (shot as a single film) finally appeared in 2017. The original series slowly subverted the conventions of detective dramas and soap operas, ironically utilising and occasionally interrupting established narrative forms with bursts of avant-garde surrealism; the third season is much more oblique altogether, at once a direct sequel and a new text which intertextually incorporates and unsettles elements of the original, working largely by implication. Barthes' reading of *Sarrasine* was undertaken in order to demonstrate 'the polysemy of the classic [realist] text'; such polysemy, 'limited' in such 'readerly' (*lisible*, readable) texts, increases hugely in the more 'writerly' (*scriptible*, writable) dimension of the avant-garde in which we can locate *Twin Peaks*.[7] A text is 'writerly' to the extent that it can be '(re)written' by the reader.[8] We can be more specific, given the medium: John Fiske, in his Barthesian account of television, has suggested that we amend the 'writerly' to the 'producerly' in the context of the small screen: '[a] producerly text combines the televisual characteristics of a writerly text with the easy accessibility of the readerly'.[9] It is possible that this designation applies more to the original run of *Twin Peaks* than to the more impenetrable newer manifestation. Nonetheless, in what follows, I will draw on Barthes' analysis in *S/Z* to elucidate the varied ways in which *Twin Peaks: The Return* produces, multiplies and 'jams' meaning.[10] The version of interpretation which Barthes championed is concerned with the activity of the signifier, rather than with an attempt to pinpoint the signified; thus here I seek to resist the temptation (encouraged by its many

enigmas) to give *Twin Peaks* 'that additional structure which would come from a dissertation and would close it'.[11] For Barthes, '[t]o interpret a text is not to give it a (more or less justified, more or less free) meaning, but on the contrary to appreciate what *plural* constitutes it'.[12] That extensive plurality is written into *Twin Peaks* is attested to by the many competing interpretations available online and in scholarly journals and books; established critical readings have usefully drawn on Michel Foucault's work, and particularly the concept of the heterotopia, to describe the significant extent of its games with order and meaning.[13] In considering what Barthes brings to the conversation, we can begin with his contention that no *existing* text can be 'absolutely plural'; the notion of a completely writerly text is an 'ideal', corresponding to 'the novelistic without the novel, poetry without the poem', or, in this context, the filmic without a specific film. [14] The truly writerly text would have no narrative, structure, referent whatsoever. In keeping with this observation, I will consider the structuring of sounds and symbols in *Twin Peaks: The Return*, the ways in which it enables the viewer to partially make sense of it, as well as the ways in which plurality simultaneously develops. Given the length and complexity of *The Return*, I am not able, as Barthes is with *Sarrasine*, to break down the entire text into its constituent lexias ('blocks of signification').[15] Nor will I attempt to offer a comprehensive analysis. However, in what follows I aim to alight on particular elements to show, with Barthes' assistance, how signification both appears and multiplies in this latest *Twin Peaks*.

Arguably the first intrusion of something otherworldly (as differentiated from something uncanny) into *Twin Peaks* came in the famous dream sequence that closed the third episode (or second after the pilot) of season one: here Cooper dreams of himself, much older, sat in a mysterious room lined with red curtains. Laura Palmer – or someone who resembles her – whispers something in his ear which he cannot later recall, while jazz music plays and the red-suited 'Man from Another Place' dances. This sequence functions very much like dreams do in the films of Luis Buñuel, which is to say surrealistically: it disturbs the surface of the presented reality.[16] By the end of the series, Cooper's dream has become real, and prophetic: the red room is revealed as the 'waiting room' of the Black Lodge, in which nightmares come to life. Given that *Twin Peaks* finally travelled 'through the looking glass' in the final episode of its original run, it would be unreasonable to expect the narrative techniques employed previously to feature in *The Return*; as Kingsley Marshall and Rupert Loydell observe, 'narrative cause and effect' is here largely

abandoned for 'a complex combination of visual and sonic information' which articulates 'the fluidity of space, temporality and subjectivity'.[17] As it opens, 25 years later, Cooper remains trapped in the Lodge; his doppelgänger, referred to by an accomplice as Mr C, is still out in the world, where he has created a criminal empire and a brutal trail of sexual violence and murder. A headless male torso found in Buckhorn, Dakota, grotesquely topped by the head of a murdered librarian, turns out to be that of Major Briggs, a key character in the second series. There is Lodge involvement. A local headteacher is arrested on suspicion of the murders; he has been unwisely attempting to open a portal between worlds. In New York, a man is paid to watch a transparent box; disobeying orders not to let anyone visit, he invites his girlfriend over and the pair are eviscerated by an alarming creature that manifests in the box, seemingly summoned by sex. Mr C (later implied to have funded the building and surveillance of the box) has had his allotted time on Earth, but plans to avoid being recalled to the Lodge; he has manufactured a 'tulpa' – an entity brought to life by meditation in theosophical lore – to take his place.[18] This tulpa, named Dougie, lives in Las Vegas, working as an insurance broker; a scruffier, fatter version of Agent Cooper, he is married with a son, and consorts with prostitutes in a newly-built suburb of unsold houses.

There are thus, at this early stage of the narrative, three Coopers, all played by Kyle MacLachlan. Subsequently, when Dougie is transported to the Lodge instead of Mr C, an amnesiac and semi-catatonic Cooper will take his place, and remain unconscious of his identity for most of *The Return*. This situation retrospectively adds a prophetic dimension to an earlier scene: in the second episode of the second series (1991), Cooper is visited by Major Briggs, involved in secret Government monitoring of UFOs, who bears a printout of a transmission which seems to be from space but actually originates in the woods around Twin Peaks. Several repetitions of the name 'COOPER' are visible.[19] Such re-signifying of older elements is evident throughout *The Return*, most notably perhaps with regard to an incident from the prequel film *Fire Walk with Me*: before the murder of Laura Palmer has occurred and before Cooper has been to Twin Peaks, the missing agent Phillip Jeffries suddenly reappears at FBI headquarters in Philadelphia, seems to indicate that Cooper is not who he appears to be ('who do you think this is there?'), and states with conviction that 'I'm not going to talk about Judy; in fact, we're not going to talk about Judy at all, we're going to keep her out of it'. This reference to Judy, who appears nowhere in the original run, was left hanging; in *The Return*, she (or, perhaps, 'it') emerges as perhaps the most powerful of the Lodge

beings, seemingly aligned with Laura Palmer's mother Sarah in the same way that Laura's killer, her incestuous and murderous father Leland, was with Bob. In both cases here, a floating signifier is now given a signified; some enigmas are consequently resolved, though these lead in turn to new ones (as, in the original series, the revealing of Laura's murderer led on to the further enigma of the Lodges).

In this way, too, an antithesis – mothers and fathers – at work in the first two series is reintroduced with a different emphasis. There are more such antitheses at work, most obviously that which supposedly exists between the Black and White Lodges (the latter having been posited as the benevolent opposite of the former, though its existence is largely conjectural within the world depicted). Antitheses form a key aspect of one of the five codes which, for Barthes, form a 'network' from which 'the text is woven', and 'whose origin is lost in the vast perspective of the *already-written*'.[20] Barthes uses shortened capitalised descriptors to indicate the presence of each code in the lexias he identifies; a lexia will often signify in more than one code at once. The hermeneutic code (HER) involves the creation of enigmas, various techniques for deferring their resolution, and (in a realist text) their eventual disclosure. Linked to this, the proairetic code (ACT) denotes actions which propel the narrative, and therefore structure it alongside the code of enigmas (such actions 'should be indicated merely by listing').[21] These two codes involve sequence, and thus 'impose their terms according to an irreversible order' in the empirical world of the classic realist text, where this order or 'constraint' is what '*reduces the plural*'.[22] In *Twin Peaks: The Return*, as this order begins to collapse into what one character describes as 'the dream of time and space' (the Log Lady, part 10), significant reversibility is introduced into these codes too (despite the mess that Cooper may have made of things at the end). The other three codes 'establish permutable, reversible connections, outside the constraint of time' even in the classic text, and are thus of greater interest to Barthes.[23] The cultural code (REF) involves references the text makes to existing knowledge, be this scientific knowledge, (cultural) history or received wisdom, while the semantic code (SEM) is the code of 'semes', or signifiers which are connoted by that which is explicitly stated. In realism, semes work principally to produce 'character': thus, Sarrasine's statement that '[n]othing can frighten me' produces the seme '[s]tubbornness'.[24] Finally, the symbolic code (SYM), in which semes are systematised, involves 'multivalence' and 'reversibility' and includes the text's (re)production, transgression and reversal of antitheses.[25] *Twin Peaks: The Return* is clearly not a realist text; the codes operate very

differently here. In what follows I will firstly consider the peculiar operation of the hermeneutic code within *The Return*, moving subsequently to its rupturing of antitheses and to the further destabilising effect of a particular interaction between the symbolic and cultural codes.

Sounds, Symbols and Hermeneutics: Judy

The first line of new dialogue in *The Return* is spoken by a figure who appears to be the mysterious Giant, deliverer of gnomic clues to Cooper in the second season. He is played by the same actor, Carel Struycken, and wears a similar bow tie, though the closing credits list him not as the Giant but as '???????'. Thus, this may not be the Giant, but his double. The set of question marks recurs in the credits for part 8, though by part 14 he has been named as 'The Fireman' (the seven letters of the word 'fireman' thus take the place of seven question marks). This name instantly takes its place in the symbolic code (antithesis: good/ evil), since fire is associated with the Black Lodge: various characters in the original series report a smell of burnt engine oil when Lodge entities are near, and Leland Palmer recalls that Bob (whom he knew as 'Robertson') would throw lit matches at him when he was a boy ('do you want to play with fire, little boy?').[26] Mike, speaking from within his vessel, the one-armed shoe salesman Phillip Gerard, recites a poem to Cooper which runs as follows: 'Through the darkness of future past / The magician longs to see. / One chants out between two worlds / "Fire, walk with me"' (episode 13). Since a fireman puts out fires, this Fireman must be opposed to the Black Lodge, though (intentionally or not) an ambiguity which may be significant is introduced intertextually: the firemen of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) set fires. At the beginning of part one, the enigmatic being sits opposite Cooper and addresses him as follows:

> *Fireman*: Agent Cooper. Listen … to the sounds.
> *(The Fireman looks to an antique gramophone, which repeatedly emits a scratching noise.)*
> *Fireman*: It is in … our house now.
> *Cooper* (anxiously): It is?
> *Fireman*: It all cannot be … said aloud now. Remember … four three zero. Richard and … Linda. Two birds … with one stone.

> *Cooper* (confidently): I understand.
> *Fireman*: You … are far away.
> *Cooper vanishes as a different scratching noise appears on the soundtrack.*

This scene, placed at the beginning but quite possibly occurring after the series' end, again gives us some signifiers whose signifieds are later clarified and some which are not, quite. At the end of *The Return*, Cooper and his former secretary Diane (never seen in the original series but here played by Laura Dern) drive 430 miles and cross over into a version of the world in which they are no longer known as Cooper and Diane but instead as Richard and Linda; they have sex at a motel before separating. Travelling to Odessa, Texas, a seemingly out-of-sorts Cooper locates a diner named 'Eat at Judy's' (SEM: presence of Judy; SYM: evil, Black Lodge) and subsequently the address of one Carrie Page, who works as a waitress there and appears to be Laura Palmer, though she does not recognise the name (another double, played again by Sheryl Lee, who also played Laura's identical cousin Maddy in the original series).

The name 'Page' evokes the oft-referred-to missing page of Laura's diary; the connection seems uncanny precisely because it is unexplained, in the same way that, in the original series, the daemonic Mike and Bob unaccountably share their names with the high-school delinquents Mike and Bobby. The sense produced by these hermeneutic dead ends is of a logic which eludes understanding, and such a sense is of central importance. Cooper drives with Carrie to the Palmer house in Twin Peaks, but the door is answered by an Alice Tremond, who seems never to have heard of the Palmers and says she bought the house from Mrs. Chalfont (names associated with the Black Lodge, which thus signify in the symbolic code as well as in the hermeneutic: if this house is in the possession of the Tremonds / Chalfonts, it is inhabited by Lodge beings). Cooper reels in the street, asking what year it is (an echo of Phillip Gerard's question, repeated several times throughout *The Return*: 'is it future or is it past?'); the distant sound of Laura's mother Sarah calling her name is heard and Carrie screams, seemingly with the weight of memory returning. The lights in the house suddenly go out with a crackle of electricity, and we cut to black. Since electricity is associated with the Black Lodge, this might symbolise its defeat, but this reading seems difficult to sustain given the overwhelming and consistent mood of bleakness which characterises the whole final episode.[27] This is conveyed by, among other things, the sounds: Cooper's awakening in part 16, and the beginning of his journey

from Las Vegas to Twin Peaks, were accompanied by a triumphant swelling of the series' theme, but here, the similar journey of Carrie / Laura and Richard / Cooper (which takes up almost eight minutes of screen time) is characterised largely by an uncomfortable silence (SEM: something awry). The final shot, soundtracked by a mournful drone, replays part 2's reworking of Cooper's dream from the third episode of the original series, in which a crucial difference is apparent: in the red room, Laura whispers something in Cooper's ear, but here he looks stunned, distraught. What exactly has happened is not clear, but the sounds combine with the actors' expressions to signify that something has gone very wrong, and that Cooper is 'far away' from understanding.

The Fireman's advice to Cooper concerning sounds is thus also a metatextual instruction directed to the viewer. Andrew T. Burt observes that in *The Return* '[e]ven innocuous sounds, such as buzzes and clicks, are not just complementary, but they are integral to the narrative'; sound here is 'portentous'.[28] Marshall and Loydell further note that sounds 'supplement visual representation', providing 'guidance […] as to the characters, their place in the timeline and the spaces they occupy'.[29] Sounds also function as narrative signifiers which help to suggest, in otherwise abstruse scenes, what may be occurring. An example of this is the song recorded by The Platters in 1956, 'My Prayer', whose lyric (written by Jimmy Kennedy in 1939) acquires a sinister significance in a story involving inhabiting spirits: 'When the twilight is gone / You come into my heart / And here in my heart you will stay / While I pray' (SEM: possession; SYM: Black Lodge). The song appears twice in *The Return*: in the first instance, a local radio station plays it in New Mexico in 1956 (Part 8) as two supernatural 'Woodsmen' of charred appearance (SEM: burnt engine oil, fire; SYM: Black Lodge; evil), versions of whom we have seen in earlier episodes, appear in the desert and approach a car, bellowing the repeated question 'Gotta light?' (SEM: fire; SYM: Black Lodge; evil). One, bearing a startling resemblance to Abraham Lincoln (and played by an actor known for performing as Lincoln; REF: distorted return of American history), enters the radio station and murders the receptionist before taking control of the microphone.[30] As he speaks, the town falls into unconsciousness, and a gruesome hybrid creature, seemingly part moth and part frog, crawls into the mouth of a young girl who may or may not be Laura's mother, Sarah.[31] 'My Prayer' is thus now connected to the Black Lodge and to the theme of possession.

When it plays again, it is to soundtrack the extended, disturbing sex scene which takes place between Cooper / Richard and Diane / Linda

in the final part. Diane, we know by this stage, was raped by Mr C several years after his initial appearance at the end of the second season. We do not know the precise nature of the prior relationship between Cooper and Diane. Here, Cooper stares inscrutably, looking up at Diane; Diane's expression connotes deep anguish as she covers Cooper's face and begins to weep, staring at the ceiling, seeming to signify that the traumatic memory of Mr C is returning (as well as possibly something else; she subsequently leaves a note to 'Richard', signed 'Linda', saying that 'I don't recognise you anymore'). This bleak encounter could be a form of farewell, or an attempt to re-find what was brutally destroyed by Mr C. It is preceded by dialogue which suggests that this painful coupling is somehow necessary: after they enter the motel room, Diane asks 'what do we do now?' and is told by Cooper, who speaks without passion, 'you come over here to me'. This enigma (HER: unexplained action) invites us to interpret it, especially given that there are echoes of earlier scenes, which are noted by David Auerbach.[32] In New York, the weird entity which appeared in the box seemed drawn into it by sexual activity. A difference is that here, the sex was represented as pleasurable; however, we might remember from the original *Twin Peaks* that Bob feeds on 'fear' as well as 'the pleasures' (episode 13), and from *Fire Walk with Me* that Lodge entities consume 'pain and suffering', which are certainly evident in the union of Diane and Cooper. Furthermore, 'My Prayer' evokes that earlier scene in which it was linked to the Black Lodge and to the appearance of an invasive and monstrous entity, while its lyrics describe an attempt at communion. A plausible interpretation is offered by Auerbach: Cooper and Diane are engaging in a 'summoning ritual' (ACT: conjuring; REF: esoteric practices: sexual magic).[33] The scene nonetheless resists attempts to definitively pinpoint what is happening; my point here is not to give it a final meaning ('more or less justified…' in Barthes' words), but to indicate the way in which the repetition of 'My Prayer' signifies hermeneutically as well as symbolically.

The scratching noise emitting from the gramophone, to which Cooper is introduced at the beginning, operates in a different way: it is introduced as a mystery to be solved (HER: mysterious sound). The noise recurs significantly at the close of the penultimate part, shortly before Cooper and Diane drive 430 miles to another world. In Twin Peaks, Mr C has been defeated and with him, seemingly, Bob; Cooper, accompanied by his FBI boss Gordon Cole (David Lynch) and Diane, enters a portal in the Great Northern Hotel which leads him firstly to a motel that exists between worlds, home to a metamorphosed Agent Phillip Jeffries.

Subsequently, in an ingenious reincorporation and manipulation of old footage, we revisit the night of Laura Palmer's murder as depicted in *Fire Walk with Me*; in that film, Laura talks with one of her two boyfriends in the woods before running away to her death, and is startled by something off-camera which is not explained. Here that something is Cooper, who follows her and pulls her away, changing history: however, Laura suddenly screams and disappears. At this point the scratching noise is heard. Its potential significance is generated by linked chains of signifiers and semes which accumulate throughout *The Return*. In the Fireman's speech, the sound is associated with an 'it' which is 'in our house now'. Following this, we are introduced to the entity which manifests in the box in New York, named as the 'Experiment' in the credits, as well as to something Mr C wants: he shows a soon-to-be-murdered accomplice a playing card on which a crude drawing of a black circular mass with something resembling antennae has been made (part 2). The symbol later recurs in a message left by the deceased Major Briggs in Twin Peaks (discovered in part 9), where it is pictured above the mountains that give the town its name, and beneath the moon; in part 11, this same image appears on an ancient map in the possession of Deputy Chief Hawk. Hawk says that 'you don't ever want to know about that', and is later warned by the town's resident sage, the Log Lady, to 'watch for that one. The one I told you about. The one under the moon on Blue Pine Mountain' (part 15). Images, words and actions conjure an enigma (HER: unknown and dangerous force), which evokes the symbolic antithesis of the Lodges, themselves embedded in a network of cultural references.[34]

The narrative has previously travelled back (in part 8) to the detonation of the first atomic bomb on 16 July 1945 (REF: history: nuclear testing; SYM: tear in reality); in the midst of the explosion, an entity appears which resembles a fusion of the two images we have already seen, a version of the creature from New York but with antennae or horns on its head as in Mr C's playing card (the credits again name it as the 'Experiment'). It vomits forth a stream of eggs, which includes a black orb with Bob's face (as well as one which will hatch into the creature that crawls into the young girl). The eggs and the creature's breasts connote the feminine, and, since it births Bob, a more specific seme: 'mother'. In an earlier scene, Cooper was warned that 'mother' was banging on the door as he made his escape from the Lodge (part 3); he subsequently appears briefly in the box in New York shortly before the Experiment manifests. Later, it is revealed that something violent inhabits Laura Palmer's *mother* Sarah. All this connects with Gordon Cole's description, in the episode

which ends with Cooper's failed rescue attempt, of 'an entity, an extreme negative force' known as 'Judy' or 'Jowday', against which Cole's secret organisation (which includes Cooper and Jeffries) is working; Cole also says that Cooper spoke of killing two birds with one stone.[35] The 'it' referred to by the Fireman would seem to correspond to this Judy; by the time the scratching sound recurs in part 17, it is associated with 'her' in some way. For Auerbach, the Fireman has taken Laura, for the purpose of luring Judy into a constructed trap; the sound signifies that this has occurred ('it is in … our house now'), which is why Cooper was told to listen for it.[36] However, it also appears at moments other than the two already mentioned, 'distorted', as Carson Carruth observes, 'to sound like electricity'. [37] It is notable that difference plays a role here; in the first scene, the scratching noise that comes from the gramophone is differentiated from the *other* scratching sound that subsequently accompanies Cooper's disappearance, which seems to take place at the behest of the Fireman ('you are far away' being readable as a sort of dismissal, in addition to being a response to Cooper's claim to understand). This latter sound appears in *The Return* to soundtrack certain reality shifts, but at other times (and not only when reality alters) it is replaced by a version of the noise from the gramophone, as when this soundtracks shots of powerlines as Mr C travels to Twin Peaks (part 17). For Carruth, the sound signifies that 'Judy is present or nearby'.[38] Who has taken Laura at the end of part 17 is perhaps less significant than the fact of her disappearance (SEM: failed quest), though immediately before this happens, after Cooper has 'rescued' Laura, we cut to Sarah Palmer attacking Laura's portrait angrily, and when a version of Laura reappears in Odessa as Carrie Page, she works at 'Judy's' diner (which may, of course, be merely a coincidence).

Barthes locates points in *Sarrasine* when the narrator's discourse 'mixes two codes': the hermeneutic and the symbolic.[39] In *The Return*, in a related way, visual elements as well as sounds resonate both symbolically and hermeneutically. A telegraph pole emblazoned with the number 6 outside Carrie's house has appeared in other locations in both *The Return* and *Fire Walk with Me*, associated with Lodge activity. Part 18 also features two images of a white horse: one in the form of a children's ride outside 'Eat at Judy's', and the other a figurine on Carrie's mantelpiece. The white horse is connected with Sarah, and the appearance of a version of it outside 'Judy's' diner might be interpreted as a further hint that Sarah and Judy are aligned; a vision of the horse appears to Sarah in the original series before Leland / Bob murders Laura's cousin Maddy, and in *Fire*

Walk with Me she sees it after she has consumed drugged milk, given to her by Leland so that he can molest Laura undisturbed. It also appears before Cooper in part 2 of *The Return*. The code of reference leads us to the 'pale horse' of Death in the book of Revelation, specifically invoked by the Log Lady in her introduction to the original series' episode 14 ('woe to the ones who behold the pale horse').[40] The Woodsman addressing the New Mexico town in 1956 (*The Return*, part 8) adds another symbolic meaning: '[t]he horse is the white of the eyes, and dark within'. Eyes become white when one looks away, as Sarah does while her husband violates their daughter; white eyes also evoke the doppelgängers of the Black Lodge, with their milky pupils, and thus connote doubling and splitting of the self. Because nothing here is explicit, undecidability haunts any attempt to entirely systematise what is going on, and with good reason as I will argue. However, we *are* able to understand the stakes of the narrative, and what Cooper is attempting to do, not as a result of cause-and-effect storytelling (though there is some of that too) but by an active piecing together of the signifiers, including the sounds and symbols, in ways which involve the interaction of the codes described by Barthes – particularly the hermeneutic, the semantic and the symbolic.

The Plural: Antitheses and Doubles

What Barthes would call the 'plural' of *The Return* is generated partially by its habit of withholding information, in which activity it resembles the 'new novels' of Alain Robbe-Grillet such as *Le Voyeur* (1955). Here a travelling salesman visits an island, his itinerary detailed exhaustively (one might say neurotically) bar one missing hour, in which he may or may not have murdered a young girl. How we read his actions will depend on whether we think him guilty, a suspicion which is consistently encouraged but never fully justified by the text.[41] Barthes notes that in such novels 'the action is described, but its meaning is kept tacit'; 'the event' is not accompanied by 'its signification'.[42] This is true of the sex scene between Diane and Cooper in *The Return* and of its ending, as well as of many other elements within it, as for example those involving Laura Palmer's former classmate Audrey Horne. Audrey was a central character in *Twin Peaks*, and when last seen was caught in an explosion at the town bank. In *The Return* she is mentioned in part 7, when it is suggested that she was visited (and by implication sexually assaulted) by Mr C whilst comatose;

however she does not appear in person until part 12, in a series of scenes spread over four episodes which initially seem unconnected to the rest of the narrative. Audrey argues repeatedly with her husband Charlie, who seems at points to address her as if he were her psychologist, about characters we do not appear to have met ('Billy' and 'Tina'); Charlie threatens to 'end [Audrey's] story' (part 13). She wishes to go to the Roadhouse, Twin Peaks' biker bar, at which various musical acts have performed in the closing sequences of *The Return*'s prior episodes. When Audrey and Charlie finally get there in part 16, the MC announces 'Audrey's Dance', and Audrey reprises her iconic dance from the original series. Violence erupts and she starts to panic; electricity crackles as the scene abruptly shifts, and Audrey is suddenly looking at her reflection in a white room. A distorted version of the scratching noise associated with Judy now appears on the soundtrack. This is the last scene in which Audrey appears.

The white room connotes some sort of institution (SEM: insanity); perhaps Audrey's conversations with 'Charlie' were distorted, hallucinatory versions of dialogues with a doctor. Supernatural elements have been suggested, however, in addition to the 'Judy' sound: to Charlie, Audrey says that she feels like she is in Ghostwood, the forest surrounding Twin Peaks which emits otherworldly activity (part 13). Following her awakening in part 16, we cut back to the band in the Roadhouse, who are still playing 'Audrey's Dance', but backwards: Lodge entities speak backwards, as when Mr C attempts a grotesque version of Cooper's bonhomie in greeting Gordon Cole: '[i]t's yrev very good to see you again, old friend' (part 4). Audrey also says that 'I'm not sure who I am but I'm not me' (part 13). This line of dialogue – 'I'm not me' – recurs during part 16, where it is spoken by Diane, shortly before it is revealed that she is not the real Diane, but a tulpa created by Mr C. Audrey may be one too, or she may be trapped somewhere in the Lodge. It is precisely the undecidability of her fate, produced by both a lack of explanation and an excess of connotation, that enables it to resonate in multiple ways with larger enigmas. For Audrey, reality is dislocated, as it is for the whole town, and, as Adam Daniel notes, her visit to the Roadhouse also unsettles the ontological status of at least some of the other scenes which take place there.[43] The reality of the Roadhouse is further disturbed by an uncanny metafictional element: 'Audrey's Dance' is the name the piece of music has on the *Twin Peaks* soundtrack CD, but it was presented in the original series as emerging diegetically from a radio at the Double R diner.[44] Audrey's apparent desire to recreate the past doubles Cooper's later

attempt to reset it. Like Cooper, too – and like virtually everyone in *Twin Peaks* – Audrey is herself double ('I'm not me'). Such doubling has been a central concern of the series since its beginning, as is indicated by its title (and, among other things, the name of the town's diner, the Double R); as Diane Stevenson notes, the original series 'is full of parallels and correspondences that […] lead us to consider every character and every situation as an echo, a doubling, a recurrence, of another character or situation: and all somehow as an echo, a doubling, a recurrence, of the father-daughter incest at the center'.[45] The appearance of actual doppelgängers at the end of season 2, and their multiplication in *The Return*, can therefore be seen as a development, or more precisely a literalisation, of this scenario. This presentation of 'double after double', as Dominic Lash puts it, leads to considerable disruption of the antitheses which are for Barthes a key aspect of the symbolic code.[46]

Barthes describes 'the Antithesis' as 'one of the most stable' rhetorical figures descending from classical culture; 'its apparent function is to consecrate (and domesticate) by a name, by a metalinguistic object, the division between opposites and the very irreducibility of this division'.[47] At points, *Twin Peaks* sets up such antitheses: Good and Bad Cooper exist as physically separate beings, and there are supposedly Black and White Lodges. These antitheses are, though, subsequently disturbed. As Kwasu David Tembo observes in a Lacanian reading of *The Return*, the Cooper doppelgänger 'represents the malign application of the exact same skill sets and character attributes [as Cooper], if not improved versions of them', and shares Cooper's memories as well as his desire to locate Judy.[48] That Cooper contains the trace of his double is illustrated by the reincorporation, with a difference, of something Cooper says early in the original series: deflecting a seduction attempt by the adolescent Audrey Horne, Cooper states that '[w]hat I want and what I need are two different things, Audrey' (episode 6). In *The Return*, Mr C says to his associate that 'if there's one thing you should know about me, Ray, it's that I don't *need* anything. I want' (part 2). The difference between the twin Coopers resembles that between the ego (Cooper) and the id (Mr C) in Freudian psychoanalysis: where the ego defers desires in the interest of the reality principle, the id is characterised by the compulsion for immediate pleasure. It is tempting to pose id and ego as entirely separate psychical agencies, but Freud notes that the supposed opposition between them is 'only to be regarded as holding good on the average or "ideally"'.[49] Ego and id intersect, and this situation also pertains between the Coopers. Mr C brutally actualises Cooper's suppressed wishes: Diane, with whom

Cooper constantly flirted in his Dictaphone recordings in the original series, and Audrey, to whom Cooper confessed an attraction, are both subject to sexual assaults by the doppelgänger (stated and implied, respectively). When Cooper becomes 'Richard' in the final hour of *The Return*, following the defeat and apparent destruction of Mr C, he is not quite the same Cooper that we have known, and Mr C's traits are suddenly evident: threatened by three men (the number three again) in Judy's diner, Richard / Cooper responds with cold, efficient violence, and does not seem to care whether bystanders are hurt. It is notable, too, that 'Richard' is the name of the deeply unpleasant son borne by Audrey Horne as a result of what is implied to be her rape by Mr C. Names and even faces do not signify reliably in *Twin Peaks*, and float free of their supposed owners. Dougie is not Cooper, but has his face, as does Mr C, who is and is not Cooper; the amnesiac Cooper is not quite himself and not quite Dougie either, though he is given Dougie's name and inhabits his place in the symbolic order; 'Richard' is and is not Cooper, in which sense he resembles Mr C, who is also partially Bob (Mr C's reflection distorts to show Bob's grimace in part 5: to the mirror he says '[y]ou're still with me. That's good').[50] Naido (whom Cooper meets in the Lodge in part 3) turns out to be a metamorphosed Diane; the Diane who appears throughout most of *The Return* is a tulpa; the Diane we meet at the end may not be the original Diane, especially as she glimpses another double of herself outside the motel in part 18, and subsequently becomes 'Linda'. Audrey is not herself; Sarah Palmer is seemingly also Judy, as Leland was also Bob; Laura, always split and doubled in the series and the film, is (probably, possibly) now also Carrie Page.

The situation resembles that which exists in E.T.A. Hoffmann's great doppelgänger narrative *The Devil's Elixirs* (*Die Elixiere des Teufels*, 1815-16) as described by Freud; indeed, Freud could well have been summarising *Twin Peaks*, particularly *The Return*:

> a person may identify himself with another and so become unsure of his true self; or he may substitute the other's self for his own. The self may thus be duplicated, divided and interchanged. Finally there is the constant recurrence of the same thing, the repetition of the same facial features, the same characters, the same destinies, the same misdeeds, even the same names [...].[51]

This further affects the symbolic antithesis of good and evil since even Lodge entities have doppelgängers, as is made clear both in the conclusion

of the original series and in *The Return* (part 2). These beings are in any case highly ambiguous; the 'Man From Another Place' seems moderately benevolent in the original series, but he is associated closely with Bob in *Fire Walk with Me*. In the original series, Bob was visible but Mike was not; he appeared only in the form of his host, Phillip Gerard. Gerard guides Cooper in *The Return*; whether he is also still the morally undecidable Mike is unclear.[52] To return to the Fireman, who may be the doppelgänger of the Giant from the second season, and is introduced as '???????': those question marks attached to him in the credits for early episodes are replaced but not entirely erased by the revealing of his name. He seems opposed to Judy and Mr C, but there is no guarantee that he acts on the side of Cooper, or even on that of good, as humanly interpreted. Is he always the same being in every one of his appearances? We might think that his lair as depicted in *The Return* is the fabled White Lodge, but nothing in the series confirms this.[53] Indeed, the supposed antithesis of the Black and White Lodges, which is only spoken of by human characters, may itself be wide of the mark: when Cooper enters the 'Black Lodge' at the end of season two, he is greeted by a red room whose floor is marked significantly with alternating black and white chevrons. The White Lodge is not named at all in *The Return*, and the only reference to its opposite is made by Mr C, who refers to '*what they call* the Black Lodge' (part 2; my emphasis). Barthes observes that '[e]very joining of two antithetical terms, every mixture, every conciliation – in short, every passage through the wall of the Antithesis – […] constitutes a transgression'.[54] Such transgressions multiply in *The Return*; it takes us too through the 'wall' of the antithesis between reality and dream, in a manner which resonates with both surrealism and the philosophical questioning of the nature of reality evident in such diverse places as the works of Zhuangzi, René Descartes and Lewis Carroll.[55] *The Return*'s realities become doubled and multiplied like the many personae within it. When Phillip Jeffries suddenly manifests at FBI headquarters in *Fire Walk with Me*, he bears the message that 'we live inside a dream', and the line is repeated by Cooper in *The Return* (part 17). A version of the phrase also appears in Gordon Cole's 'Monica Bellucci dream' in part 14, in which Bellucci, playing herself, quotes the *Upanishads*: '[w]e are like the dreamer who dreams and then lives inside the dream'.[56] When Cole says that he understands, Bellucci responds by asking 'but who is the dreamer?' As Lash observes, the question 'might send us searching for a singular answer', though it does not demand one; as in the scene involving Audrey, there is an additional confusion of 'reality with fiction', since 'the real Monica

Bellucci plays a fictionalized version of herself appearing in the dream of a fictional character who is played by the writer and director of this very scene'.[57] Like Audrey's uncanny visit to the Roadhouse, this discourse of dreams, combined with moments which unsettlingly inject our reality into the fiction, disturbs the status of what we are watching.

Bob and a Green Glove: Interruption of the Symbolic Code

Such uncertainty is accelerated by a further peculiarity of the symbolic code's operation in *Twin Peaks*, which is that the existence of the Lodges and their inhabitants *as* symbols is explicitly signposted. With reference to the original series, into which I shall now briefly dip, John J. Pierce argues that '[i]n the context of the story, […] they are as "real" as the Shire and Mordor and orcs and wizards in Middle Earth. BOB […] and the rest aren't supposed to be just in our heads, they're out there'.[58] Things are not quite so clear-cut, however. Stevenson describes the ambiguity very well in her account of Leland / Bob's murder of Laura Palmer's identical cousin Maddy (episode 14):

> Leland looks in the mirror and sees BOB: BOB seems to come from inside him, BOB is how he sees himself. But BOB also seems to come from outside him: all through the assault on Maddy BOB flashes into the living room and takes over Leland's place […]. As the flashes of BOB alternate with Leland […] we could be experiencing Leland's perception, or Maddy's, or the symbolic or literal materialization of a demon, or some composite perspective.[59]

We seem to be experiencing all of these at once, in a way echoed in *Fire Walk with Me*. Here, in a film which places its viewer in the hell of Laura's consciousness, Bob is represented as her way of coping with her father's sexual assaults: as Stevenson observes, 'victims of abuse may not only split themselves into different personalities as a defense mechanism but they may split the abuser in like manner'.[60] Yet Bob is simultaneously presented as a real force. The undecidable nature of Bob, and of the Lodges, is signalled also by a metafictional conversation near the conclusion of the episode in which Leland is arrested and dies in custody. Cooper wonders whether it is more difficult to believe in Bob than that 'a man would rape

and murder his own daughter'; Albert Rosenfield, Cooper's fellow FBI Agent, suggests that '[m]aybe that's all Bob is. The evil that men do. Maybe it doesn't matter what we call it' (episode 16).

Bob is defined here as a metaphor for the violent masculine id, and for the cycle of abuse. That Cooper later encounters him 'for real' in the waiting room of the Black Lodge (in the final episode of season 2) does not obliterate this uncertainty as to his textual status. As in the scene in which Leland sees Bob where his own reflection should be, the supernatural Lodges and their inhabitants are not an *explanation* for the real-world horrors depicted in *Twin Peaks*, so much as an alternative, surrealistic way of representing them: the relation between the supernatural and 'realistic' elements here is less metaphorical (substituting one meaning for another) than it is metonymical (associative or contiguous), such that it becomes 'reversible' in Barthes' term.[61] This situation is carried on in *The Return*, in which Lodge beings and portals are now everywhere and come to be associated with the problems of contemporary America. Matthew Ellis and Tyler Theus argue that '*The Return* grounds the economic violence from the fallout of the 2008 housing crisis directly within its own diegesis', as the narrative moves between 'the casino capitalism of downtown Las Vegas and an adjacent near-empty suburban residential development, fallen into disrepair', as well as a Twin Peaks beset by social problems caused by a new drug which seems connected to the Lodge.[62] We may note connections between the franchising of the Double R diner, leading to inferior copies of its celebrated cherry pie, and the doppelgängers and tulpas of the Black Lodge; Phillip Gerard says to a bewildered Dougie Jones, shortly before he self-destructs, that '[s]omeone manufactured you […]. For a purpose' (part 3). Mr C and Bob use people, especially women, 'for a purpose', like the gangsters, pimps and crooks that permeate *Twin Peaks* as well as the outwardly respectable Leland Palmer. 'Judy' is connected undecidably to the horrors of the nuclear bomb, as well as (like Bob, but differently) to *Twin Peaks*' original sin, the murder of Laura Palmer. As the associations of the Lodges multiply, *The Return* simultaneously suggests a limit to its own representative powers by continuing to unsettle its own symbols. This has something to do with Judy, as well as with a green gardening glove which signifies in the code of reference.

Bob is, as Lynch has noted, 'an abstraction with a human form'.[63] How would such a thing be defeated? *The Return* ceaselessly produces and frustrates a desire to see Cooper return and take out his Bob-affiliated double: most of the series presents us instead with the semi-catatonic

'Dougie-Cooper', who seems to have emerged from a film by Jacques Tati and passively finds his way into various comic situations. When Cooper triumphantly awakens in part 16, and speeds to the police station in Twin Peaks, the stage is finally set for a confrontation. However, even now this does not occur; Cooper's doppelgänger is shot by someone else before he arrives. Once Cooper gets there, Bob emerges from the corpse in the form of the black orb seen in part 8 and attacks him; however, Bob is subsequently (and preposterously) defeated by a new character, a Cockney named Freddie Sykes. Armed with additional strength produced by a super-powered green gardening glove melded to his right hand, Freddie punches the Bob orb repeatedly until it explodes. The scene is shot with total conviction, alternating between the perspectives of Freddie and that of the Bob orb bearing down on him at speed. As the key characters regroup following this exhilarating, violent and distinctly ridiculous victory, the scene becomes more unsettling: a sombre close-up of Cooper's face (but which Cooper?) is superimposed over it, eventually uttering the words 'we live inside a dream'. The series then concludes with Cooper's failed attempt to rescue Laura, and his bleak journey to the Palmer house in another reality. The original series of *Twin Peaks* has, as Ellis and Theus observe, 'long been thought of as a postmodern text *par excellence*', with its self-conscious intertextuality and its incorporation and manipulation of various genre signifiers.[64] In realist texts, Barthes claims, the cultural codes 'appear to establish reality, "Life"', by referring to a body of established knowledge about the world which 'generally corresponds to the set of seven or eight handbooks accessible to a diligent student in the classical bourgeois education system'.[65] Postmodern texts like *Twin Peaks* play with such codes, throwing them into question by highlighting their constructed nature.

In this fashion, the green glove signifies ironically in the cultural code of *superheroics*, and thereby modifies the symbolic code to which it is also tied: in part 14, Freddie explains that, after a drunken night out in 'London town', he somehow found himself in the presence of the Fireman (a 'bloke up in the sky'), who told him that he must visit a particular shop and buy a single green gardening glove, thence to travel to Twin Peaks and 'find [his] destiny' (REF: cliché, underlined by Freddie's declaration as the Bob orb appears: 'this here's me destiny'). The superhero film is of course a dominant presence in contemporary culture and the genre is characterised by climactic and spectacular battles (as well as the 'origin story'); *The Return*'s absurdist presentation of such a battle suggests that the expectation of it is a form of culturally-produced 'stupidity', in

Barthes' phrase.[66] So, perhaps, is Cooper's attempt to return to the primal scene of *Twin Peaks* and effect a happy ending. As Anthony Ballas argues, 'BOB […] is only defeated on the level of semblance'; the 'radical evil' he symbolises cannot be obviously overcome.[67] *The Return*'s development of *Twin Peaks* into a different type of narrative can thus be considered in relation to Jean-François Lyotard's claim that the postmodern 'searches for new presentations […] in order to impart a stronger sense of the unpresentable'.[68] Bob, who wears a human face, is gradually replaced here as the antagonist by the faceless 'Judy', which – since Gordon Cole's description of it is never confirmed – may not be an 'entity' (a singular and thus possibly vanquishable being) at all. 'Judy' is evoked by multiple differing symbols and sounds and is never seen directly; 'The Experiment' seems at most an avatar and does not look precisely the same in its two appearances. Cole says that the name 'Judy' is itself a corruption of a prior name, 'Jowday', which may in turn be a corruption of something else: the signifier is explicitly presented as missing its referent, and this has consequences also for the other signifiers that evoke this 'negative force'. *The Return* finally returns to Laura Palmer's scream, sign of a trauma which can neither be adequately represented nor simply dispelled. The symbolic code of *Twin Peaks* is disturbed not only by the transgression of antitheses, but by the suggestion that it is itself only a way of figuring that which resists any sort of representation. Another element of undecidability is thereby produced.

Barthes emphasises that 'the writerly text is not a thing, we would have a hard time finding it in a bookstore'. It is '*ourselves writing*' before 'some singular system […] reduces the plurality of entrances, the opening of networks, the infinity of languages'.[69] Readerly texts, by contrast, are 'products' which constitute the vast majority of fictions. Barthes' analysis of *Sarrasine* demonstrates that 'the story *represents* (we are in a readerly art) a generalized collapse of economies' which leads to 'an unrestrained metonymy', even as it suggests that such a thing 'is fatal'. The word 'represents' is key: in the modern or postmodern text, such a collapse is not only represented (kept at a distance, 'individuated, separate, assigned'), but effected more comprehensively on a formal level.[70] So it is in *Twin Peaks*. I have sought here to demonstrate that Barthes' method of analysis in *S/Z*, developed in relation to a 'classic', readerly text, can also usefully illuminate the operation of the signifier in another kind of text, one which is more writerly than readerly, albeit not so much so that it is devoid of thematic coherence (this is not quite 'structuration without structure').[71] Barthes enables analysis of the ways in which the codes interact to establish

a degree of sense in *Twin Peaks: The Return*, as well as of the ways in which it transgresses the slash that divides S from Z, self from other, dream from reality, singular from multiple; for Barthes, this is 'the slash of censure, the surface of the mirror, the wall of hallucination, the verge of antithesis, the abstraction of limit, the obliquity of the signifier, the index of the paradigm, hence of meaning'.[72] Its crossing produces a situation of disorientation; as the transmogrified Agent Phillip Jeffries says in part 17 of *The Return*, 'it's slippery in here'. Barthes contends that the stability we find in realism descends not from really existing reality but from fiction; 'the realistic author spends his time referring back to books: reality is what has been written'.[73] The slipperiness of *The Return* is the productive experience of the undecidable, the essence of writing in Barthes' extended sense of the term, in which the fictions by which we make sense of the real can be revealed in all their contingency. 'We are like the dreamer who dreams and then lives inside the dream.'

Notes

[1] Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. by Richard Miller (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p. 17.
[2] The slash is also the cut of castration. As Barthes observes, '*S* and Z are in a relation of graphological inversion: the same letter seen from the other side of the mirror' (*S/Z*, p. 107). This mirroring is, though, not quite exact.
[3] Karl Miller, *Doubles: Studies in Literary History* (London: Faber, 2008), p. 25.
[4] My references are to *Twin Peaks: The Definitive Gold Box Edition* (CBS, DVD, 2010), *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (2entertain, DVD, 2007) and *Twin Peaks: A Limited Event Series* (Showtime/ Universal, DVD, 2017). The third series of *Twin Peaks* is known by three semi-official names (appropriately, perhaps, given the recurrence of the number three within it): '*Twin Peaks* season 3', *Twin Peaks: A Limited Event Series* (the title of the DVD / Blu-Ray box-set) and *Twin Peaks*: *The Return* (in advance publicity). I have opted for the latter title following the convention established by Antonio Sanna in his edited collection *Critical Essays on Twin Peaks: The Return* (Cham: Springer / Palgrave Macmillan, 2019). In referencing *Twin Peaks*, I adopt the conventional practice of considering the original series as the pilot plus episodes 1-29; *The Return* is referenced as parts 1-18.
[5] It has become conventional to refer to Bob (Frank Silva), as well as his foe Mike (not directly seen), in capital letters (BOB and MIKE), possibly to distinguish them from the human characters Mike and Bobby as well as to signify their otherworldliness. However, in both the credits and the subtitles for the original series, they are named as Bob (sometimes 'Killer Bob') and Mike. When I quote critics I reproduce the capitals, but otherwise use the designators given in the series. 'Bob' and 'Mike' are mere names; their ordinariness is surely the point. As Freud observed, '[t]he uncanny […] is in some way a species of the familiar'. Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. by David McLintock (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 134.
[6] This interpretation is confirmed by *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*, which, as its tagline claims, depicts 'the last seven days of Laura Palmer'. In an instance of time being out of joint, which will become a dominant element in *The Return*, the bloodied figure of Annie Blackburn – Cooper's girlfriend in the original series' later episodes who is taken to the Black Lodge – appears to Laura at night, telling her that 'the good Dale is in the Lodge and he can't leave. Write it in your diary'. Naturally, this page of the diary is located by the police in *The Return*. In the closing scene of *Fire Walk with Me*, which takes place in the Lodge, the benevolent Cooper comforts the weeping spirit of Laura Palmer following her murder.
[7] Barthes, *S/Z*, pp. 8, 11, 5. As Catherine Belsey rightly observes, the translation of *lisible* and *scriptible* as 'readerly' and 'writerly' is 'unhelpful', as it 'sounds like jargon'. Catherine Belsey, *Criticism* (London: Profile, 2016), p. 121. I preserve it here only for consistency with other quotations.
[8] Barthes, *S/Z*, p. 206.

[9] John Fiske, *Television Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 95.
[10] In the realist text, '*jamming*' or 'acknowledgement of the insolubility of the enigma' is the seventh stage of ten steps toward resolution; as Cooper says in part 17 of *The Return*, ten is 'the number of completion', but *Twin Peaks* does not proceed towards the last stage, '*disclosure*, *decipherment*' (Barthes, *S/Z*, p. 210).
[11] Barthes, *S/Z*, p. 13.
[12] Barthes, *S/Z*, p. 5.
[13] The concept of the heterotopia involves 'the disorder in which fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately in the dimension of the *heteroclite* […]. *Heterotopias* are disturbing […] because they destroy "syntax" in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things […] to "hold together"'. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. xvii-xviii. On heterotopia and *Twin Peaks: The Return*, see Joel Hawkes, 'Movement in the Box: The Production of Surreal Social Space and the Alienated Body', in *Critical Essays on Twin Peaks: The Return,* ed. by Antonio Sanna (Cham: Springer / Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 149-168 (especially pp. 155-56). Drawing on *The Order of Things* more generally, J. P. Telotte has shown how, in the original series, 'empty signifiers randomly crop up amidst overly determined ones' in a way which unsettles meaning, order, in general. J. P. Telotte, 'The Dis-order of Things in *Twin Peaks*', in *Full of Secrets: Critical Approaches to Twin Peaks*, ed. by David Lavery (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), p. 167.
[14] Barthes, *S/Z*, pp. 6, 5.
[15] Barthes, *S/Z*, p. 13.
[16] See, for example, the progressive confusion of dream and reality that occurs in *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* (1972). For a reading of *Twin Peaks* as a surrealist text, see Nicola Glaubitz and Jens Schröter, 'Surreal and Surrealist Elements in David Lynch's Television Series *Twin Peaks*', in *Approaching Twin Peaks: Critical Essays on the Original Series*, ed by. Eric Hoffman and Dominick Grace (Jefferson: McFarland, 2017), pp. 15-29.
[17] Kingsley Marshall and Rupert Loydell, '"Listen to the Sounds": Sound and Storytelling in *Twin Peaks: The Return*', in *Critical Essays on Twin Peaks: The Return*, ed. by Antonio Sanna (Cham: Springer / Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), p. 278.
[18] The word was introduced by Alexandra David-Néel in her book *Magic and Mystery in Tibet* (1929) as a transcription of the Tibetan term '*sprul-pa'*, denoting the idea of manifesting something. Natasha L. Mikles and Joseph P. Laycock demonstrate that David-Néel's description of tulpas 'was more consistent with Theosophical literature about "thought-forms" written by Annie Besant (1847–1933) in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries' than with anything in Tibetan culture; 'the contemporary paranormal *tulpa*', which features in various supernatural fictions, 'takes its concept from Theosophy and its name from a

Tibetan root word'. See Natasha L. Mikles and Joseph P. Laycock, 'Tracking the *Tulpa*: Exploring the "Tibetan" Origins of a Contemporary Paranormal Idea', *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, 19.1 (August 2015), 89, 94.

[19] When the note is found by Major Briggs' son Bobby in part 9 of *The Return*, it has been trimmed to include only two 'COOPER's, thus alerting the police in Twin Peaks to the existence of the doppelgänger.

[20] Barthes, *S/Z*, pp. 20, 21, 30.

[21] Barthes, *S/Z*, p. 19.

[22] Barthes, *S/Z*, p. 30.

[23] Barthes, *S/Z*, p. 30.

[24] Barthes, *S/Z*, p. 165.

[25] Barthes, *S/Z*, p. 19.

[26] Episode 10. The line is repeated by Leland's daughter Laura, subject to nightly assaults by him, in *Fire Walk with Me*.

[27] However, see note 33 below. On electricity, Bob was obscurely connected to the movement of the ceiling fan in the Palmer house in both the original series and *Fire Walk with Me*. In the latter film, the Man from Another Place (who refers to himself as 'The Arm', suggesting he is the personification of Phillip Gerard's severed limb) speaks of electricity and is connected to the number 6 telegraph pole (see below); there are a number of shots of power lines. Electricity is central in *The Return* too, facilitating journeys between worlds. It has also been a key feature of Lynch's work for many years, though I am not pursuing an auterist reading here; see Lindsay Hallam, *Twin Peaks Fire Walk with Me*, Devil's Advocates (Leighton Buzzard: Auteur, 2018), pp. 90-91.

[28] Andrew T. Burt, 'Is It the Wind in the Tall Trees or Just the Distant Buzz of Electricity?: Sound and Music as Portent in *Twin Peaks*' Season Three', in *Critical Essays on Twin Peaks: The Return*, ed. by Antonio Sanna (Cham: Springer / Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), p. 266.

[29] Marshall and Loydell, '"Listen to the Sounds"', p. 270.

[30] See the IMDB page for Robert Broski: https://www.imdb.com/name/nm3716858/ (accessed 9 July 2020).

[31] It can be objected that this loose end is definitively tied up in Mark Frost's book *Twin Peaks: The Final Dossier* (London: Macmillan, 2017), published following the series' end, in which it is made clear that the girl in New Mexico was Sarah Palmer (p. 136). Fascinating though this parallel text is – as an insight into Lynch and Frost's differing approaches to the same material among other things – I am confining my remarks here to the series itself, in which the identity of the girl is implied (by virtue of the later scene in which Sarah is shown to be hosting another entity) but not confirmed.

[32] See David Auerbach, '*Twin Peaks* Finale: A Theory of Cooper, Laura, Diane, and Judy' (2017), available online at https://www.waggish.org/2017/twin-peaks-finale/ (accessed on 9 July 2020).

[33] Auerbach, '*Twin Peaks* Finale'. Auerbach draws a parallel between the box in New York and what may be a parallel universe (where Cooper is Richard) in the final episode, perhaps created by the Fireman as a 'cage' to lure Judy in; for Auerbach, Cooper and Diane are thus attempting to conjure Judy under instruction. The '[t]wo birds … with one stone' referred to by the Fireman (and later by Gordon Cole, who says that Cooper spoke the phrase to him) are the undoing of Laura's murder and the destruction of Judy. Here, the ending is bad news for Cooper and Laura, but a successful outcome for the Fireman: '[t]he plan worked. "It" entered our house at the very beginning of episode 1 and exited at the very end of episode 18. The daughter's trauma, caused by her father [and represented by the scream], destroys her mother.' It takes Cooper and Laura, and the 'cage' universe, with it. This is an ingenious reading, though, like everything else here, not unassailable given the omnipresent indeterminacy.

[34] As Sanna observes, the mythology of Twin Peaks descends from 'the writings of the Theosophical Society and the Order of the Golden Dawn': Black and White Lodges appear in Aleister Crowley's *Moonchild* (1917), Talbot Mundy's *The Devil's Guard* (1926) and Dion Fortune's *Psychic Self-Defense* (1935). See Antonio Sanna, 'Entering the World of *Twin Peaks*', in *Critical Essays on Twin Peaks: The Return*, ed. by Antonio Sanna (Cham: Springer / Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), p. 7.

[35] This of course either echoes or anticipates the Fireman's words at the beginning of part one. The 'two birds' may be the finding of Laura and the defeat of Judy.

[36] Auerbach, '*Twin Peaks* Finale'.

[37] Carson Carruth, 'Finding Judy: A Scene by Scene Analysis' (2019), available online at https://25yearslatersite.com/2019/05/22/finding-judy-a-scene-by-scene-analysis-by-guest-author-carson-carruth/ (accessed on 21 July 2020).

[38] Carruth, 'Finding Judy'.

[39] Barthes, *S/Z*, pp. 76-77.

[40] Revelation 6:8.

[41] In an essay on this novel, Barthes notes that 'if we are tempted to read rape and murder in *The Voyeur* as acts deriving from a pathology, we are abusively inferring content from form: we are once again victims of that prejudice which makes us attribute to the novel an essence, that of the real, of *our* reality'. Roland Barthes, 'Literal Literature', in *Critical Essays*, trans. by Richard Howard (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1981), p. 55. A similar temptation is offered by *The Return*.

[42] Barthes, *S/Z*, p. 79.

[43] Adam Daniel, 'Kafka's Crime Film: *Twin Peaks – The Return* and the Brotherhood of Lynch and Kafka', in *Critical Essays on Twin Peaks: The Return*, ed. by Antonio Sanna (Cham: Springer / Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), p. 230.

[44] A possible reading is suggested by Hawkes in 'Movement in the Box': '[i]t is, then, Sherilyn Fenn, who plays Audrey, not Audrey, who appears to be trapped in the show' (p. 158). Charlie, then, resembles a director (Lynch), who can 'end [her] story'. The sequence resonates intertextually with the plight of Norma

Desmond in Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), as Julie Grossman and Will Schiebel contend in *Twin Peaks*, TV Milestones (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2020), p. 51. The name 'Gordon Cole' comes from Wilder's film.

[45] Diane Stevenson, 'Family Romance, Family Violence, and the Fantastic in *Twin Peaks*', in *Full of Secrets: Critical Approaches to Twin Peaks*, ed. by David Lavery (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995) p. 77.

[46] Dominic Lash, 'The Dangers of Getting What You Asked For: Double Time in *Twin Peaks: The Return*', *Open Screens*, 3.1 (2020), 1. As Lash observes, *The Return* is also, in a sense, a doppelgänger of the original *Twin Peaks*.

[47] Barthes, *S/Z*, pp. 26-27.

[48] Kwasu David Tembo, 'Copy of a Copy of a Copy: Theorizing the Triplicity of Self and Otherness in Season Three of *Twin Peaks*', in *Critical Essays on Twin Peaks: The Return*, ed. by Antonio Sanna (Cham: Springer / Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), p. 189.

[49] Sigmund Freud, 'The Ego and the Id', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIX (1923-1925): The Ego and the Id and Other Works*, trans. by James Strachey et al. (London: Vintage, 2001), p. 25.

[50] A further oddity: in part 18, Cooper receives instruction from Phillip Gerard in the red room. Subsequently we see, *seemingly from Cooper's point of view*, Cooper enter from the corner of the room. He is then addressed by Leland Palmer, who has taken his place in the chair. How many Coopers are there?

[51] Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. by David McLintock (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 142.

[52] In the series, Mike says he 'saw the face of God' and is intent on stopping Bob for this reason (episode 13). In *Fire Walk with Me*, he seems chiefly aggrieved that Bob stole his share of pain and suffering or 'garmonbozia', which manifests, bizarrely, as creamed corn: 'You stole the corn! I had it canned above the store'.

[53] However, some critics refer to it as such: see, for example, Timothy William Galow, 'From *Lost Highway* to *Twin Peaks*: Representations of Trauma and Transformation in Lynch's Late Works', in *Critical Essays on Twin Peaks: The Return*, ed. by Antonio Sanna (Cham: Springer / Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), p. 211.

[54] Barthes, *S/Z*, p. 27.

[55] In his 'Discussion on Making All Things Equal' (4th century BCE), Zhuangzi (Zhuang Zhou, Chuang Tzu) claims that 'someday there will be a great awakening when we know that this is all a great dream'. Chuang Tzu, *Basic Writings*, trans. by Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), p. 43. René Descartes, in his First *Meditation* (1641), finds when reflecting upon the persuasive reality of his dreams that 'I see so manifestly that there are no certain indications by which we may clearly distinguish wakefulness from sleep'. René Descartes, *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, Vol. 1, trans. by Elizabeth S. Haldane & G. R. T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Press, 1911), pp. 145-6. The confusion of dream and reality is a theme of Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872), in which Alice is disconcertingly advised by Tweedledum and Tweedledee not to wake the sleeping Red King, as 'you're only a sort of thing in his dream'. Lewis Carroll, *The Complete Illustrated Works of Lewis Carroll* (London: Chancellor Press, 1982), p. 164.

[56] '"We are like the spider," said the king. "We weave our life, and then move along in it. We are like the dreamer who dreams and then lives in the dream.' 'Bālāki the Proud Teacher, from the Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad', in Thomas Egenes and Kumuda Reddy, *Eternal Stories from the Upanishads* (New Delhi: Smriti Books, 2002), p. 71.

[57] Lash, 'The Dangers of Getting What You Asked For', 1.

[58] John J. Pierce, 'Intercourse Between Two Worlds', in *Approaching Twin Peaks: Critical Essays on the Original Series*, ed by. Eric Hoffman and Dominick Grace (Jefferson: McFarland, 2017), p. 42.

[59] Stevenson, 'Family Romance, Family Violence, and the Fantastic in *Twin Peaks*', pp. 75-76.

[60] Stevenson, 'Family Romance, Family Violence, and the Fantastic in *Twin Peaks*', p. 76.

[61] Thus, for Fred Botting, the original series presents evil 'as an effect of images and narrative surfaces', part of 'a web of duplicity and ambivalent effects that contaminates all cultural boundaries and distinctions'. Fred Botting, *Gothic*, The New Critical Idiom (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 176. Such multiplying duplicity is everywhere in *The Return* too, although here evil seems to be shifted more definitively to the level of the (Lacanian) real, 'that silent or silenced exteriority which is also inside us', in Catherine Belsey's words, 'and which we cannot symbolize, delimit, specify or know, even when we can name it "the real"'. Catherine Belsey, *Culture and the Real: Theorizing Cultural Criticism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), p. 14. Hence 'Judy'.

[62] Matthew Ellis and Tyler Theus, 'Is It Happening Again? *Twin Peaks* and "*The Return*" of History', in *Critical Essays on Twin Peaks: The Return*, ed. by Antonio Sanna (Cham: Springer / Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), p. 31.

[63] Chris Rodley, ed., *Lynch on Lynch*, rev. edn (London: Faber, 2005), p. 178.

[64] Ellis and Theus, 'Is It Happening Again?', p. 31.

[65] Barthes, *S/Z*, pp. 205-06.

[66] Barthes, *S/Z*, p. 206.

[67] Anthony Ballas, '"My Log Has a Message for You," or, *Vibrant Matter* and *Twin Peaks*: On Thing-Power and Subjectivity', in *Critical Essays on Twin Peaks: The Return*, ed. by Antonio Sanna (Cham: Springer / Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 129, 128.

[68] Jean-François Lyotard, 'Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?', trans. by Régis Durand, in *Postmodernism: A Reader*, ed. by Thomas Docherty (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), p. 46.

[69] Barthes, *S/Z*, p. 5.

[70] Barthes, *S/Z*, pp. 215-16.

[71] Barthes, *S/Z*, p. 5.
[72] Barthes, *S/Z*, p. 107.
[73] Barthes, *S/Z*, p. 39.

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