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Film, Language and Meaning: a Linguistic Approach to Understanding Filmic Meaning

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Film, Language and Meaning

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Sacha-Samuel DEBARD

Mémoire réalisé sous la direction de Monsieur le Professeur Denis JAMET

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Sacha-Samuel Debard

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0. INTRODUCTION

Through millennia, the evolution of language has permitted humanity to communicate ideas and concepts to posterity. While the oral transmission faced many shortcomings, submitted to the mental capacities and the life expectancies of the individuals, the written mode quickly became the best guarantee for the posterity. The early modes of writing were mimetic, pictograms, whose signifier and signified were the same: the picture of a buffalo signified a buffalo. Then, the evolution of language became more abstract, to the extent of making minimal units (alphabet) whose organization made words (signifiers) defining a referent in the real world (signified). These abstractions also permitted to define concepts that had no reference in the real world (e.g. Justice, Death), or if they had, only metaphorically or metonymically.

Until the late 19th century, the written mode was the only medium to transmit information all around the world, especially with the invention of the printing machine by Gutenberg which made the production of copies easier.

Yet, the invention of the cinematographer by Auguste and Louis Lumière in 1895 gave a new perspective to the transmission of information: instead of using language to transmit an idea to an interlocutor, it could now be shot and projected to a large audience. In a certain way, the cinematographer improved the communication technique of pictograms; it was now possible to transmit information by telling and showing it.

The status of cinema became more complex in the late 20s, where sound became synchronic in films (on the contrary to silent films) and added another mode of expression to cinema. Even if silent films were more universal in their messages (only the intertitles had to be translated), synchronic sound permitted to add a phonic message to the picture onscreen. Consequently, even the illiterate individual could understand the message, as long as they spoke the same language.

This new communication tool became a new media in the 20th century which was very useful for powerful institutions, especially for propaganda during WW2 and McCarthyism and advertisement in the 1960s. When domestic television appeared, it became possible to transmit the American Dream directly at home.

Even if arts have always been submitted to power, they are still arts and cinema is one of them. Yet, the particularity of cinema is that it is perhaps the art whose illusion of reality is the most obvious. The father of film critic André Bazin used to say “le cinéma substitue à nos regards, un monde qui s’accorde à nos désirs”. Cinema can put pictures on literature, words on paintings, time to photographs, and different point of views to drama, to the extent of exploring what is off the stage. Cinema is made of the arts that preceded it.

With the emergence of this complex medium, many theorists started to discuss the status of cinema as a way to communicate, and the underlying sense that the *mise-en-scène* could convey. Indeed, if someone is filmed in two different ways, one close shot, one long shot, the picture would have the same subject, but not the same meaning. This is how film theory emerged in the mid-20th century with Bazin and Eisenstein, who focused on its status as art; then after WW2, linguists (especially semioticians) started discussing the status of cinema as a language. This latter case is the one on which this thesis will focus on. If we consider cinema as a way to communicate, how does it transmit the information? **Problem is**, a piece of art is dependent of the artist who made it. Therefore, the construction of a strict grammar of cinema is already biased. Nevertheless, film is a composite medium that follows a certain number of conventions that can be respected or transgressed. Let us see how the different linguistic approaches on cinema contribute to the understanding of a film in its different components and their meanings.

We will see firstly some of the different linguistic theories on cinema such as the modern theory and the cognitive theory. From these approaches, we will try to see how it is possible to

organise the key components of a film in a single pattern that the spectator could use like a matrix in the situation of watching a film. Eventually we will experiment this matrix on a corpus of three filmic objects which have the same director, and are about the same story: *Twin Peaks*.

In this experiment, we will see that in many cases, there are key pieces of information that are not told in dialogues or shown in the action onscreen, but are present in the *mise-en-scène*.

The main goal of this thesis is to develop a main pattern that would permit the novice viewer to decode the underlying meaning of a film, like “subject-verb-object” is the main pattern that permits the listener to decode the meaning of an English sentence.

1. LINGUISTIC THEORIES ON CINEMA

1.1 Film Theory in the 20th Century

During the past century, many approaches have been developed on cinema, whose views on the cinematographic object varied according to the theory. Film theory started in the beginning of the 20th century in Europe, especially in the USSR with Sergei M. Eisenstein, Lev Kulechov and Dziga Vertov, and in France with André Bazin, where the main concern could be summarized as follows: can we consider film as an art? History gave the answer by giving it the French pseudonym 'septième art' (seventh art in English). Two big turns in the theory then happened after WW2: First, what Warren Buckland calls Modern Film Theory [Buckland 2000: 3], a structuralist approach, notably led by the works of semioticians like Roland Barthes, who applied a common structure to the James Bond films in "Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits" [Barthes 1966]; and of course Christian Metz who questioned the status of the cinema as a language (*langage*), or a language system (*langue*). This is a question about which we can argue that, if not a language, cinema is a way of communicating. This first turn made a schism in the theoretical field between the European school (structuralists and post-structuralists) and the Anglo-American school, paving the way for cognitivism. This is a division that I will consider in the next part.

1.1.1 The ideological approach

The second turn in film theory started a few years later with the appearance of the multiple scholar theories in Human Sciences. This is a turn which started before the 1960s with the precursory Marxist theory, which found its development with post-structuralism and what is called nowadays the French Theory. All this led to a gathering of theories whose motto was

“deconstruction”, and whose approach was more focused on social grounds: Feminism, Gender, Psychoanalysis, etc. In these approaches, there is a tendency to lose the critical reading of the film in general, at the benefit of the said theory. Moreover, the theorist usually focuses only on the content, the *diegesis*, losing then a large part of the cinematographic object. If we take for example the feminist theory, most of the analysis will be focused on the power relation represented in the film, between the oppressor (usually patriarchy) and the oppressed (women). David Bordwell criticized this approach, arguing that a film such as Alfred Hitchcock’s *Psycho*, under the gaze of a feminist eye can be abstracted as concealing the male fear of woman’s sexuality [Bordwell 1989: 8-9].

This way of approaching films highlights a few shortcomings. First, it creates views on films that minimize the quality of the whole message. To continue on the Feminist approach, let us mention the creation of the Bechdel test, which consists of rating how women are portrayed on screen with three major rules : “It has to have at least two (named) women in it, who talk to each other, about something besides a man” (*Bechdel Test Movie List*, 2018). Under this scope, a film like Martin Scorsese’s *The Departed* might be connoted as bad, despite its success and the Academy awards it won.

Secondly, these approaches distance themselves from the critical view that one should have when analysing a piece of art. John Crowe Ransom considered this ideological criticism in a famous article, “Criticism Inc.”, [1937] and defended a new wave of criticism that started to appear in literary studies. He highlighted the proletarian wave that appeared in literary studies as follows:

Following the excitement produced by the Humanist diversion, there is now one due to the Leftist, or Proletarians, who are also diversionists. Their diversion is likewise moral. It is just as proper for them to ferret out class-consciousness in literature, and to make literature serve the cause of loving-comradeship, as it is for the Humanist to censure romanticism and to use the topic and the literary exhibit, as the occasion of reviving the Aristotelian moral canon [Ransom 1937]

In order to make the difference in quality of the reviews, Ransom advocated that relevant criticism was the matter of three categories of people: the artist, the philosopher and the scholar. Then he added to the article some approaches that would be excluded from criticism: personal registration, synopsis and paraphrase, historical studies, linguistic¹ studies, moral studies and “any other special studies which deal with some abstract or prose content taken out of the work” [Ransom 1937]. If we take into account these maxims on literary studies, we might apply them to this new wave in film studies as well, and so leave aside the ideological theories away from our approach of cinematographic language.

The only exception that can be made about ideological level is when the filmic object is claimed as militant. In such a case, the film can be then approached under the scope of ideology, and be extended to extra-cinematographic elements of the film, especially the director. As Christian Metz said about political influence in cinema: “Selon les films, selon les cinéastes [...] l’influence peut être plus forte dans un sens ou dans l’autre. Il y a des cas extrêmes : dans le film « militant » de type classique, les choix cinématographiques sont sous la dépendance directe d’intentions extra-cinématographiques ; dans le film « artiste » c’est juste le contraire.” [Metz, 1971: 83]. If a film does not correspond to this condition, the best thing for the film enthusiast, who wants to develop a critical eye, would be to avoid these approaches, at least over a first phase. Let us now consider the division that appeared with the linguistic turn in film theory, which is the main topic of this thesis. Beforehand, it must be acknowledged that the reviews of the different theories are not exhaustive, as there are many, and that **this research focuses on the different levels on which the language of cinema can be approached by the spectator.**

¹In this case, “linguistics” has to be considered as it was at that time. Ransom defines it as follows:

“Under this head come those studies which define the meaning of unusual words and idioms, including the foreign and archaic ones, and identify the allusions. The total benefit of linguistics for criticism would be the assurance that the latter was based on perfect logical understanding of the content, or “interpretation.” Acquaintance with all the languages and literatures in the world would not necessarily produce a critic, though it might save one from damaging errors” [Ransom 1937]

1.1.2 Modern and Cognitive Film Theories

In 2000, Warren Buckland highlighted the division of film theories in *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*, and made a chart to summarize the different approaches between linguists and cognitivists, and the attempts by some theorists to gather cognitive theories with semiotics [Buckland 2000: 3]

CLASSICAL FILM THEORY

Montagists (Rudolf Arnheim, Sergei M. Eisenstein)

Realists (André Bazin)

MODERN FILM THEORY

Film semiotics (Christian Metz)

Post Structural film theory (Stephen Heath, Colin MacCabe, Metz...)

COGNITIVE FILM THEORY (David Bordwell, Noël Carroll, Murray Smith...)

COGNITIVE FILM SEMIOTICS

New theories of enunciation (Christian Metz, Francesco Casetti)

Semio-Pragmatics of film (Roger Odin)

Transformational generative grammar and cognitive semantics of film (Michel Colin, Dominique Chateau)

Before discussing the subpart on enunciation theory, let us summarize the notions that divide the Modern film Theory and the Cognitive film theory. Buckland underlines the two philosophical traditions that lead to the two approaches: “whereas cognitivists adopt the first person perspective of epistemology (philosophy of the subject), semioticians adopt the third person perspective of the Language Analysis tradition” [Buckland 2000: 17]. We will now discuss the major point of these perspectives under the theories made by the most famous theorists, Christian Metz for the Modern Film Theory, and Bordwell for the Cognitive film theory.

1.2 First Modern and Cognitive approaches on film.

1.2.1 Metz and the *Grande Syntagmatique*

In the 1960s, Christian Metz decided to extend semiotic theories on cinema to find a certain structure in the filmic object. His main goal was to find out if film is a **language (*langage*)** **and also a language system (*langue*)**, inspired by the concepts coined by Ferdinand de Saussure. With this structural view, he attempted first to identify the minimal unit of a film: the shot, which plays under five orders (signifier) that construct the meaning (signified):

Le discours cinématographique inscrit ses configurations signifiantes dans des supports sensoriels de cinq ordres : l'image, le son musical, le son phonétique des « paroles », le bruit [synchronic sound], le tracé graphique des mentions écrites [subtitles, intertitles...]. [...] On ne saurait, en tout cas, définir le film comme fait de langage si l'on refuse de prendre en compte qu'il « joue » sur cinq matières signifiantes, et sur ces cinq-là. [Metz 1971:10]

This point emphasizes that contrary to written language, the cinematographic unit is already a composite unit made of different mediums. But if we consider the etymology of the word cinema, the prefix *kino* meaning motion (*Etymonline*), it includes the factor of time. The factor of time makes us realize that a frozen screenshot is not enough to make the meaning of a film, and so are the sound orders mentioned above. Metz admitted this problem and so extended this notion of unit to the “scene”. He widened his assumptions on a more syntactic level of cinema, editing (a.k.a montage), on which he managed to create a sub-code called *La Grande Syntagmatique*. He created this structure arguing that the five orders do not create the specificity of cinema, but their combination does [Buckland 2000: 8]. This structure has to be taken into account in my research, especially due to the inspiration and criticism it made subsequently.

As Xiaoyi Yuan explained, *La Grande Syntagmatique* is “an abstract classification of the meaningful possibilities when conjoining shots in narrative films. [...] Metz’s model presents

the classificatory structure in successive dichotomies that organize the syntactic organisation of scenes.” [Yuan 2014] Before discussing the syntagmas, we have to take into account an important recurring factor when we approach a film narrative. In the *diegesis* (the story told), there are three key elements that construct a sequence: the time, the place and the subject. In order to be as clear as possible, these three elements will be named *ego* (Subject), *hic* (place) and *nunc* (time)².

Metz made a difference between “scene” and “sequence” [Metz 1966: 120-124]. The former is analogous to the same term used in drama (one place, one moment, one action) and is only punctuated by camera hiatuses (change of angle, shot) and not by *diegetic* hiatuses (e.g. a conversation between two characters). The latter is like a scene but more flexible in time and place, there can be some hiatuses in *hic* and *nunc* in the same action (e.g. a pursuit sequence).

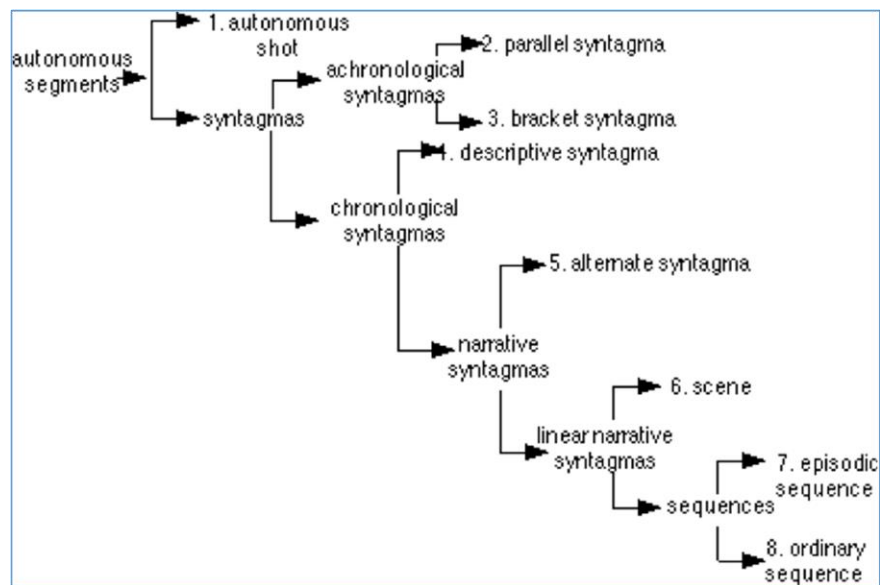


Figure 1: La Grande Syntagmatique [Metz 1966]

² Here the terms Ego, Hic and Nunc have to be taken in the broad sense of subject-place-moment, and not especially as enunciative shifters.

Following these notions of *ego*, *hic* and *nunc*, the definition of a syntagma depends upon them. As can be seen below in the figure made and improved by Michel Colin (*Figure 1*), the status of a sequence depends on the deictic markers and can go from 'ordinary sequence' to an 'autonomous shot'. The ordinary sequence being linear, narrative, chronological and syntagmatic, we can argue that Gus Van Sant's *Gerry* (2002) is mostly made by descriptive syntagmas. The film depicts two men lost and wandering in the desert: we know the subject, we know the place, but we have no time markers, and no narration.

The last element of the *Grande Syntagmatique* that we can focus on is the autonomous shot, which does not respond to any feature and that Metz subdivides in two major categories: the insert, and the sequence shot. These two specific categories of shots might have their importance in the following theories and in the section when I will discuss the methodology.

The first type of autonomous shot, the sequence shot, is a scene made in only one shot, or at least a single take [Metz 1966: 122]. This definition has to be put into perspective within the period in which Metz wrote it. It was a time where a sequence-shot could only be around 10-minute-long, due to the length of the film reel. If a director wanted to make a single take film he had two possibilities: either the film was a short feature (e.g. *L'arroseur arrosé*, Louis Lumière, 1895), or he had to make the illusion with the *mise-en-scène* (e.g. *Rope*, Alfred Hitchcock, 1948). Now at the time of the digital film, a few directors extended the duration of sequence-shots, making instead one-shot films. This was a major challenge that Alexander Sokurov overcame in *Russian Ark* (2002), in which the unnamed narrator wanders through the Winter Palace in Saint Petersburg. The noticeable fact of this film is that when the camera enters a new room, it is a new period of Russian history. This film challenges then the deictic features of the *Grande Syntagmatique*, as there is a change in time without any cut.

The second type of autonomous shot, the insert, is divided by Metz into four types as follows:

Les images *non-diégétique* (métaphores pures), les images dites *subjectives* (c'est à dire celles qui ne sont point visées comme présentes mais visées-comme-absentes par le héros diégétique, exemple : souvenir, rêve...) les images pleinement diégétiques et « réelles » mais *déplacées* (c'est-à-dire soustraites à leur emplacement filmique normal et portées à dessein en enclave dans un syntagme d'accueil étranger ; exemple : au milieu d'une séquence relative aux poursuivants, une image unique des poursuivis), et enfin les inserts *explicatifs* (détail grossi, effet de loupe, le motif est soustrait à son espace empirique et porté dans l'espace abstrait d'une intellection. Toutes ces sortes d'images ne sont que des inserts *que* quand elles sont présentées en une seule fois et au milieu d'un syntagme étranger. Mais si elles sont organisées en série et présentées en alternance avec une autre série, elles donnent lieu à un syntagme alternant. [Metz 1966: 122-123]

In this definition of inserts, especially the non-*diegetic* one, Metz implies that the meaning of the insert is not complete and needs the construction of the spectator to be completed. In a certain way, this opens the cognitive approach on film, confirmed by Bordwell who acknowledges the value of the *Grande Syntagmatique* while arguing against the semiotic theories of film.

To summarize the theory offered in Metz's early studies, the meaning of cinema must be focused on the structure of the filmic object, free from any context such as the director or the spectator. In this same approach on films, the editing is the structure in which the meaning is the most relevant. Later on, most of the structural theories (Metz's included) added Marxist and/or psychoanalytic frameworks in their semiotic approach, which created the theoretical turn by film theorists overseas, rejecting psychoanalysis in favour of the cognitive framework.

We will now have a look at the main arguments of cognitive film theory without developing it thoroughly. This surface presentation is made for two main contradictory reasons. First, there is no need to go thoroughly in a theory that takes a deliberate distance from linguistic theories (cognitive linguistics), since my research is based on a linguistic framework. Secondly, this cognitive turn has been an essential approach to develop the different semio-cognitive theories of films and considered aspects of film that were not highlighted before.

1.2.2 Cognitive Film Theory

The cognitive turn, which happened in the mid-1980s, was first a criticism of the Modern theory. Buckland summarized this criticism as a new consideration of the spectator:

One of the dominant reasons the cognitivists criticize modern film theory is the behaviourism implicit in its account of subject positioning, in which the spectator is automatically and unfailingly positioned as an ideological subject, with no cognitive capacity to process and manipulate the film. In other words, the modern film theorists posited a direct, unmediated relation between the stimulus and the spectator's response, which, as Bordwell observes "impute[s] a fundamental passivity to the spectator." [Buckland 2000: 13]

NOTE

The scholar that can be considered as the pioneer of this new cognitive approach of cinema is David Bordwell, as he led the movement with his book *Narration in the Fiction Film* [1985]. This book rejected the structural based-theory and developed instead a schema-based theory of filmic comprehension. The two major concepts Bordwell uses to explain the narration of films are the *fabula* and the *syuzhet*. The former is the 'raw' material of a narrative work (the 'story'), and the latter is the finished arrangement of the work as it is presented to the spectator (the 'plot') (*The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*). In these terms, Bordwell, considers that the film's *fabula* is incomplete, and can be completed by the spectator's cognitive active reading of the *syuzhet* of the film, in the process of viewing. We can summarize this principle in this pattern:

Fabula → Director → *Syuzhet* (Encoding) → Film (Code) → Spectator → Decoding → *Fabula*

This method follows a constructivist approach, under the scope of a top-down process, going from abstract schemata to understand a textual object. Bordwell explained this methodology in his article "A Case for Cognitivism":

At a broader level, I have argued elsewhere that not only do narrative films utilize mental representations for their depicted events; they also draw on historically developed conventions that involve schemata and heuristics. For example, the classical Hollywood narrative is in many ways similar to Mandler's "canonical story", and it delegates to the spectator the task of assembling events into a coherent causal whole. In contrast, the tradition of "art-cinema" narration encourages the spectator to perceive ambiguities of space, time and causality and then organize the around

schemata for authorial commentary and “objective” and “subjective” realism. The claim is that in order for films to be composed in the way they are and to produce the effects they do, some such mental representations must underpin spectatorial activity. [...] Like all intentional actions, “reading” a film ought to be mediated by mental representations. [Bordwell 1989: 27-28]

This passage gives us a clue on the dichotomy that Bordwell draws on Hollywood films and art-films, and supposes that the activity of the spectator might change depending on what he is watching. Let us first consider these two “natures” of films Bordwell presents, in order to suppose the spectator’s activity. When Bordwell uses the term “canonical story”, he implies the typical narrative process that Paul Larivaille summarized in “L’Analyse (morpho) logique du récit” (1974) as the *schéma quinaire*. This schema which describes the whole plot of a story is divided into five parts: the initial situation, the complication (element that troubles the situation), the action (means used by characters to resolve the complication), the resolution or climax (consequence of the action and highest peak of emotion), and the final situation (back to stable situation).

In this kind of situation, the spectator does not especially need to construct the *fabula*, the *syuzhet* being quite linear, and has just to follow the adventure. If we take the film *Jurassic Park* [Spielberg 1993] for example, all the *syuzhet* respect the *schéma quinaire*:

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scientists are invited to visit a park with dinosaurs, with the dangerous ones living behind an electric fence. 2. Someone deactivates the fence. The dangerous dinosaurs escape and try to eat people. 3. Scientists undertake to re-activate the security system and save the children. 4. Scientists manage to re-activate <i>in extremis</i> the system and save the children. 5. Scientists run away from the island with a helicopter, safe and sound. |
|---|

Figure 2: “Schéma quinaire” of the narration in Spielberg’s *Jurassic Park* [1993]

When the spectator watches such a film, he is free to try and understand the film’s *syuzhet* under a certain reflection (how the *mise-en-scène* creates the suspense), or he can

simply appreciate the special effects of the dinosaurs and be transported by the score of John Williams.

On the opposite, when Bordwell talks about “art-cinema” and the perception of ambiguities, he emphasizes the change of *ego*, *hic* or *nunc* in the *syuzhet*. These ambiguities trigger the spectator, who is familiar with the canonical story, and make him reconstruct the *fabula* with abstract schemata. Let us take as an example *21 Grams* [Iñárritu 2003], a film whose plot revolves around a minor news item: a man and his two daughters are run over by a car. Yet, the *syuzhet* is developed by Iñárritu under two ambiguous aspects. Firstly, the plot follows the three characters concerned by the accident: the driver of the car (Jack), the victim’s widow (Cristina) and a critically-ill mathematician (Paul) who will be transplanted the victim’s heart. Secondly, time is fragmented around the car accident. Time is not chronologically linear, sometimes events that preceded the car accident come after a post-car accident sequence (*Figure 3*). For instance, the film starts with a shot on the transplanted mathematician seating alongside the sleeping widow. It is therefore clear that the ambiguity will be in *ego* and *nunc*, while the only element on which one can rely upon is the *hic* (the town in which the three characters live).

When watching this film, if the spectator wants to understand the film’s *fabula*, he will have to construct a schema that includes a chronological timeline, divided into three personal stories (one per character) that converge on two fixed points: the car accident and the climactic moment where the three characters meet at the same time.



Figure 3: Syuzhet of Iñárritu's 21 Grams [2003]

According to Bordwell, there is always some cognitive activity in the spectator's mind. Nevertheless, it might require more or less activity, depending on the type of film being watched: "The spectator brings to the artwork expectations and hypotheses born of schemata, those in turn being derived from everyday experience, other artworks, and so forth." [Bordwell 1985: 32].

He summarized this phenomenon of the viewing experience into three processes: Firstly, the *perceptual capacities*, which considers the physiological condition of the spectator (projection of light in a dark room). Secondly, the *prior knowledge and experience*, this process considers the schemata drawn by our real-world experience: "on the basis of this schemata we make assumptions, erect expectations, and confirm or disconfirm hypotheses. Everything from recognizing objects and understanding dialogue to comprehending the film's overall story utilizes previous knowledge." [Bordwell 1985: 32]. If we relate this process to *Jurassic Park*, the spectator who is familiar with Hollywood productions might expect a happy ending from the first sequences.

The third process Bordwell offers is the *material and structure of the film*, in which the spectator constructs his own schemata from the elements he saw in the film: “The narrative film is so made as to encourage the spectator to execute story-constructing activities. The film presents cues, patterns, and gaps that shape the viewer’s application of schemata and the testing of hypotheses.” [Bordwell 1985: 33]. In the case of *21 Grams*, the schemata can only be made when the end credits appear on screen.

To summarize the cognitive approach defended by Bordwell, the comprehension of the filmic object can only be completed by the spectator’s activity. And this complete comprehension is constructed by watching the film in full, and by extracting the relevant cues in the *syuzhet*. This importance of relevance will be essential in the following chapters. Bordwell’s look on the filmic object is then more global than Metz’s, who focused on the syntactic construction, at least in his early works. In the following section we will consider his latest works based upon the enunciative theory. But before we have a look at the enunciative works of Metz and Casetti, we must mention another theory offered in parallel of the cognitive turn in Anglo-American universities.

1.2.3 Transformational Generative Grammar and Film

In parallel to the Cognitive turn, some theorists considered cinema under the scope of Generative Grammar, initiated by Noam Chomsky. In his book *Towards a Structural Psychology of Cinema* [1980], John M. Carroll criticized Metz’s *Grande Syntagmatique*, defining it as follows: “Metz’s own characterization of the theoretical implications of the *Grande Syntagmatique* are profoundly unsatisfying. His presentation is confused and often infuriating.” [Carroll 1980: 45]. From this claim, Carroll also considered editing as what might be the film’s closest dimension

that can articulate a syntax. Consequently, Carroll added to the *Grande Syntagmatique* several elements that would organize a sequence like a Transformational Generative Grammar syntactic pattern, and would subsequently create syntactic rules. He starts by considering two components of a sequence:

The transformational rule carries A nodes (action) into S nodes (shots)

Shot rule: $A \Rightarrow S$

Two or more A nodes can, of course, be collapsed into a single shot. Accordingly the Shot Rule can be restated as such: $A^* \Rightarrow S$

However there are cases in which this statement of the Shot Rule does not seem to be correct. In particular, it has been argued that cuts are unfilmic when they coincide precisely with changes in the action. [...] An example comes from the Fellini film *Nights of Cabiria*. Early in the film there is a full medium-shot of Cabiria standing outside of her house. She turns abruptly and enters the house in a profile-long shot. [Carroll 1980: 100-101]

Then, he divides the action in two segments. The first one is the notion of *Preparatory Action* (P), in which the action is about to be executed. The second is the Focal Action (F), in which the action is executed. With these elements, Carroll develops different rules of editing, and considers the sequence mentioned above as a Related-Agent Shot Rule, in which the cut does not depend upon the action but on the agent (Cabiria) and abstracts it as follows:

$X + P1 + F1 + Y + P2 + F2 + Z \Rightarrow X + P1 + S + F2 + Z$

Conditions (1) X and Y are not null

(2) F1 and F2 are mutually dominated by some A node.

An F node plus some unspecified material (Y) plus a P node are rewritten as an S node. [...]

There is a cut and, immediately coinciding with the cut, she [Cabiria] turns and enters the house in a profile-long shot. Apparently, the Shot Rule has applied when, according to its condition, it should not. The Related-Agent Shot Rule is the appropriate rule. According to it, the cut can only obtain between the time Cabiria turns toward the door, and the time she enters the house. [Carroll 1980: 102]

From these extracts, we can already highlight two major shortcomings in Carroll's theory. The first one being the extreme abstraction of the filmic elements. This abstraction of a sequence might be understandable for the TGG theorist, but it might be absolutely opaque for the ordinary film enthusiast who has to encode an audio-visual message into an abstract

sequence in quite a short duration (the whole action takes about 5 seconds). This leads us to the second shortcoming, which is the notion of relevance of the scene presented.

In short, the principle of cognitive relevance was coined by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson. This principle defends that “human cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of relevance.” [Sperber & Wilson 1986: 260]. They add to this principle the fact that relevance depends upon the processing effort. The higher the effort is, the lower the relevance will be³. So if we return on the scene from *Nights of Cabiria*, Carroll’s pattern **would be such a too long** process for such a short action, whether grammatical or ungrammatical it might be. The analysis on this scene then should be made upon a different level of the film; perhaps on the dimension of the unity (the shot), or perhaps on a larger dimension such as the full sequence. In this sequence, Cabiria has an argument with her flatmate in front of her house. The flatmate leaves, then Cabiria returns to her house, takes a look at a picture of a man which is placed on the mantelpiece. Then she turns her back on it and sits on the door step, thinking. If we follow this notion of relevance, the attention on the editing would be then more focused on Cabiria and the picture. Subsequently, the spectator might question the link that exists (or existed) between Cabiria and the man.

Even if Carroll’s approach does not seem to be the most accurate to consider the understanding of a film, it gives us clues on the fact that a film should be analysed under different levels, such as a text could be. This type of analysis starts from the double articulation of the word, to the whole book’s plot. This consideration will be taken into account in the construction of my hexadimensional pattern (a.k.a. 6-dimension pattern). Let us now consider the enunciative approach that has been notably coined by Francesco Casetti and Christian Metz in the late 80s.

³ A notion that can be compared to the ‘least effort principle’, coined by André Martinet

1.3 Enunciation and Multimodality

1.3.1 Filmic Enunciation

While the cognitive and TGG theories were developed overseas, European theorists started to consider Film with the concepts of enunciation. This approach is inspired by the works of Emile Benveniste on language, who divided enunciation in two parts: *histoire* and *discours*. There is first the *histoire*, which is the story told with no reference to the enunciation (the one who tells the story and the one who listens). The main cue for a *histoire* passage is the use of the 3rd person singular. For instance the sentence *Yesterday John watched a film with Mary* can be taken out of any context.

Then, there is *discours*, which is the type of utterance in which there is a manifest presence of enunciation and which supposes a speaker and a listener. If in a text there is the utterance *I will meet with you here, tomorrow*, 'I' and 'you' can refer to anybody if we do not refer to the co-text and the context; it is the same for the deictics "here" and "tomorrow".

In *Dentro lo sguardo* [1986], Francesco Casetti was one of the first theorists who transposed these enunciative notions on film. Like Bordwell, he considered that film had to be considered with the spectators as a relevant entity, and added also the enunciator as the one who produces the film (the director and/or the studio). Buckland qualifies Casetti's approach as a "personal filmic enunciation", since the entities are summarized in personal pronouns. The most present pronoun is 'he', as the filmic object, what is shown on screen and has its independence from enunciation (*histoire*). But there are cases in which the film becomes *discours* with filmic elements that are directly addressed to the 'you' (the spectator) and so become an 'I' (the enunciator). In this perspective, Casetti explains that, in a film, there are four types of shots whose characteristics change the status of the addressee: the objective, the interpellation, the subjective and the unreal objective. These four types of shot, and so the status

of the spectator, are summarized by Buckland [2000: 63] in the chart below, to which we added the pronoun-based definition by Metz in *Impersonal Enunciation* [Metz, 1991: 14]

<i>SHOT</i>	<i>ADDRESSEE</i>	<i>PRONOUN(S)</i>
<i>Objective</i>	<i>Witness</i>	<i>I (enunciator) and YOU (addressee) we watch IT/HIM (the utterance, character, film)</i>
<i>Interpellation</i>	<i>Spectator set aside</i>	<i>I and He we watch YOU, you who are then supposed to watch</i>
<i>Subjective</i>	<i>Identification with character</i>	<i>YOU and HE see what I am showing you</i>
<i>Unreal objective</i>	<i>Identification with camera</i>	<i>As if YOU were ME</i>

Figure 4: Casetti's "personal enunciation" [1986]

Before giving the definition of the four types of enunciative shots, we can divide them following Benveniste's two notions of *histoire* and *discours*. The objective and the unreal objective shot do not address the spectator and so are both related to the *histoire*. What makes them different is that in the objective shot, the spectator assumes the position of a witness, he is part of the *diegesis* without interfering or being looked at. The spectator shares the features of a witnessing character who is not acknowledged. So the objective shot can be considered as the most frequent type of shot. There is no address to the spectator.

In the 'unreal objective shot', the spectator has all the 'objective-shot' features without the anthropomorphic status. The spectator has a point a view that cannot be made by a human being (e.g. aerial shots, split screen...), and so he is considered as identifying with the camera. In other terms, such a type of shot is known as 'demiurgic' because it gives a point of view that seems more omniscient.

The shots that create an address to the enunciation, and so are related to the *discours*, are the Interpellation shot and the subjective shot. Buckland describes the interpellation as follows: "What Casetti means in effect is that the enunciator ('I') enters the film through the intermediary of a character ('he'), which is directly addressed to the spectator ('you')." [Buckland 2000: 62]. One of the most obvious examples of such a shot can be found in the first

sequence of Woody Allen's *Annie Hall*. This is a scene where the main character, Alvy Singer (portrayed by Woody Allen himself) talks directly to the audience about his story with Annie (Figure 5). If we consider that many critics underline the theme of psychoanalysis in Allen's films, we can suppose the address to the spectator from the character, and the enunciator. Therefore, in the interpellation shot, the spectator is directly involved in the enunciation.

Moreover it should be noted that the use of interpellation is quite subtle and *intra-diegetic*. It is *intra-diegetic* in the principle that the enunciator addresses the spectator within the *diegesis*. While at the moment the character addresses the spectator and is aware of being in a filmic object, we are more related to a stylistic mode of *mise-en-scène* called "breaking the fourth wall". This way of addressing is mostly used in the comedy genre, for instance in the movie *Deadpool* (Figure 6), where the eponymous character throws a gum off-screen, which, in the next shot, ends stuck on the camera lenses.



Figure 5: *Annie Hall* [Allen 1977]



Figure 6: *Deadpool* [Miller 2016]

The subjective shot is the reversed type of the interpellation. The spectator is not set aside anymore, facing the enunciation. He directly shares the point-of-view of the 'he', and is positioned most of the time in the character's eyes, sometimes in some other entity, capable of seeing (e.g. animals, ghosts...). Most of the time, there is just a few shots in which we share the character's view. But in such a case, the subjective shot requires first a preceding (or following) shot of the character in which the spectator will share the point of view. In such a situation, we will be talking about anaphora and cataphora.

Some directors attempted to make a whole film in POV, such as *Hardcore Henry* in 2016, which also crosses the line between cinema and videogames.

Even if Casetti opened a new way to approach films, some theorists who embraced the enunciative view criticized his theory on several aspects. Christian Metz was one of the first to praise the approach (and wrote the preamble of *Dentro lo sguardo*), but especially criticized the ‘personal pronoun’ approach, considered as too anthropomorphic, and the status of the enunciator ‘I’, on which he maintains the irrelevance to understand a film. Buckland summarizes the fundamental difference between Metz and Casetti that way:

Whereas Casetti models film on the immediacy and symmetry between filmic enunciator and addressee, as in a dialogue, Metz argues for the mediate and non-symmetrical nature of the relation between filmic enunciator and addressee—as in writing. The relation is non-symmetrical because one of the functions of writing is to dispense with the presence of the enunciator (or allow a spatio-temporal displacement between the enunciator and his utterance). Similarly, Metz dispenses with the filmic enunciator because of the way he conceives the realities of the filmic medium—it resembles the recording activity and permanence of writing rather than the immediacy and impermanence of speech. More specifically, Metz conceives film as particular type of writing namely, *histoire*, which Benveniste defined by its absence of deictic markers. [Buckland 2000:67]

In short, Metz considers film as a unidirectional language, because the spectator cannot respond to the enunciator, or at least, not directly. He argues against Casetti’s approach, based on deixis, to the benefit of the reflexivity that can be found in films. He prefers, then, to avoid the notion of the enunciator and considers the filmic object as made of two entities: the *foyer* (translated as *source*) which corresponds to the film, and the *cible* (translated as *target*) which corresponds to the spectator. In such conditions, film cannot be considered under the scope of *discours*, so every type of narration is part of *histoire*.

Yet, beyond this consideration that we will discuss in the next section, Metz expanded the possibilities of filmic enunciation beyond the limits of the shot. Even if Metz rejects the consideration of the space and time context in which the film is apprehended by the spectator,

to the benefit of the space and time depicted in the film, he underlined other modes of address that are quite relevant for this thesis: the sound mode of enunciation, the written mode, and reflexive elements. Before going further, we must note that the notion of “reflexive” has to be taken in the following sense: “taking account of itself or of the effect of the personality or presence of the researcher on what is being investigated” (*Oxford Dictionary*).

Metz considers first the notion of I-voice (retrieved from the French term of Michel Chion *Voix-Je*) as this sound commentary that can be present in film, which is usually compared to the narrator in a novel. According to Metz, this is an analogy wrongly made:

Contrary to what we too often hear, the I-voice is not similar to the interior monologue of a novel. The latter completely occupies the whole narrative channel, while the former is accompanied by images, sounds and dialogues. The I-voice attributes parts of the narrating to a character but does not tell us that that character is in the process of delivering a monologue. [Metz 1991: 108]

Metz admits that there are interior monologues onscreen, but adds that defining the I-voice that way would be reductive. Indeed, the I-voice can have three aspects, the third one having quite an importance in the enunciation theory.

First there is the intra-diegetic I-voice that comes from a character onscreen, the interior monologue. This type of I-voice is the expression of the thought of one or many characters, which permits the spectator to know more than the characters in the *diegesis*. This type of I-voice is mostly used to make a discrepancy between the dialogue scene, which expresses the character’s speech, and the I-voice, which expresses the character’s real thoughts. We can take for example the romantic comedy *What Women Want*, in which the I-voice is a major aspect of the *diegesis*. The *fabula* is about a man, Nick Marshall (Mel Gibson), who acquires the gift to read women’s minds. This gift is developed in the *syuzhet* with the use of the I-voice which expresses what female characters actually think while Nick speaks to them. Here the spectator is given quite an omniscient condition.

The second type of I-voice is the voice of a non-visible commentator who comments on the facts shown on screen. This type is close to the demiurgic mode of address. Each time the I-voice starts, the spectator (or *target*) is indirectly reminded that he is watching a film, because there is a medium between the *diegesis* and the spectator. If we take for instance the I-voice in *Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain*, portrayed by André Dussollier, this I-voice describes the life of Amélie Poulain all throughout the film, and though at no moment he is shown. So in this case the spectator's condition is limited to what is shown onscreen and told in the I-voice.

The third I-voice can be considered as the mix between the two that precede. It is when the I-voice narrates the story shown, and this voice is attributed to the character. The singular type of this I-voice is the time-space difference there is between the character in action and the character in narration. In this situation, the I-voice is the voice of the same character who has grown old, or is dead. Metz gives the example of Milos Forman's *Amadeus* [1984]:

In *Amadeus* (Milos Forman, 1984) the wild old man fallen on hard times in the asylum no longer has much in common with the Salieri he once was, a hardworking and respected court musician who has been secretly ruined by his deep and jealous admiration for Mozart. The Salieri of the asylum is in fact a narrator and he is speaking, once again, to a stand-in for the spectator, a priest who has come to hear his confession. [Metz 1991: 42]

In the manner of the subjective shot, this type of I-voice permits the spectator to share the story of a character in two different temporalities. It even sometimes permits the spectator to hear the voice of a dead person, which gives a more demiurgic status to the spectator, who hears the last confession of the departed. This latter mode has become a recurrent trope of the *Film Noir* genre films. Metz gives the example of one of the major works of this genre, *Sunset Boulevard* [Wilder 1950], where the film begins with a shot of William Holden's dead body, floating in a swimming pool. This shot goes with William Holden's I-voice:

[The structure of *Sunset Boulevard*] is related entirely in flashback and in the first person by the dead hero (William Holden), who tells us his whole story and even the circumstances of his death. His moving body and his voice-in [synchronic dialogue]

are “living” whereas his voice-off [narration], which “emanates” from the dead body that we see pitifully floating in the swimming pool speaks to us from some other world, or from nowhere. [Metz 1991: 42]

This temporal dichotomy then puts the spectator in the situation where he sees the visualisation of the voice-off character. This situation can be then approached under the scope of enunciative linguistics since most of the text of the I-voice is directly referring to the action onscreen.

Metz continues his enunciative approach on film with the written mode. He considers first a written mode that disappeared with the arrival of synchronic sound (a.k.a sound film). In silent cinema, all the dialogues were shown by intertitles [*carton*], which were displayed before or after the action referred, so in *anaphora* or *cataphora* of the *diegesis*. Like the I-voice, the intertitles were also explanatory for the action coming, or deictics to emphasize the change of hic and/or nunc in the *fabula*. This process already required a cognitive effort by the spectator:

When they [intertitles] report dialogue in silent films they are diegetical, or to be exact, they are diegeticized by the spectator by virtue of a *convention of metonymic attribution*. They are in the full sense of the term “put in the mouth” of characters appearing just before or just afterward. [Metz 1991:46]

Metz, then continues his presentation of a written mode that he calls ‘explanatory titles’ which were also between two shots in silent film, but their information was closer to the narration since they are not attributed to characters. They are some information from the *source* for the *target*:

These sentences emanate from the source [foyer] of enunciation and, for the duration of one title, the narrative (or filmic narrative) act is content to inform the spectator directly, provisionally withdrawing sustenance from the intervening and autonomous *nature* [*physis*] of a character. [...] There is a great variety of markers of enunciation, just as they are unvarying in having a basis in the concept of textual folding. [...] There are titles that provisionally replace the image in its narrative function and independently supply certain elements of the story rather than

comment on them: “Three days later...,” “London, 1890,” “Not far away...”, and all the other intertitles of this large category. [Metz 1991: 47]

Now that sound cinema is the usual convention for contemporary film, we could argue that these written modes of address are obsolete. But in fact, their informative function has not changed. Only the way they are displayed has. Like the sound, the titles have become synchronic. Especially in the case of foreign films, dialogue intertitles have become subtitles which are displayed at the bottom of the screen and give the translation of the dialogues. The ‘explanatory titles’ are still used onscreen when there is a new sequence, in which the *hic* and *nunc* have changed. For instance, in the movie *Dunkirk*, the *fabula* of the film is about WW2’s *operation dynamo*. But the *syuzhet* of the film is fragmented in the different areas of the operation (air, earth, sea), and each area has its own temporality which depends upon the T-Time which is the execution of the operation (*Figure 7*)



THE MOLE : One week



THE SEA: One day



THE AIR: One hour

Figure 7: Written mode of address in Dunkirk [Nolan 2017]

We can note that some directors keep on using intertitles to mark the change of sequence in the deixis, like chapters in a book. One of the regular users of intertitles is Quentin Tarantino, who uses the intertitles to mark the change in the deixis.

So the written modes of enunciation in film is mostly used to inform the spectator of the spatio-temporal *syuzhet*.

The last part that we will overview in Metz’s ‘impersonal enunciation’ is all the elements present in a shot that could create reflexivity in the spectator’s mind. Of course one could argue

that every element can bring reflexivity, it only depends upon what is shown and in which context. But in most cases we are dealing with symbolic interpretation. When Metz talks about reflexive elements, he means elements that are directly or indirectly related to the action of watching a film. He starts with the notion of mirrors, which is a reflexive element in both senses: “every mirror is like a camera (or a projector) because it projects the image a second time, because it offers it a second shot, because it has an *emissive* power.” [Metz 1991: 63] Indeed, the mirror can reveal more than what is shown on frame (e.g. elements/characters that are off-frame), and that the character(s) cannot see. In *Shining* [Kubrick 1980] for instance, there are several shots in which mirrors express the double nature of Jack Nicholson’s character. There is on the one side the nice father of the beginning, and on the other side the psychopathic monster.

So the use of mirrors depends especially on the context of the sequence and it will be approached more closely in the corpus analysis.

Like mirrors, the other elements that Metz presents are also revealing of the nature of cinema. Frames within the frame are reflexive in the sense that they recall the act of the spectator who is watching a frame in a movie theatre, and reframe it. ‘Showing the apparatus’ is the presence of intra-diegetic elements in the film that are directly related to cinema. For instance, if there is a movie camera in a shot, the spectator might consider the introspection on the art itself. It can be the same when there are celebrities in the film who act as themselves and not as characters. For instance in Spike Jonze’s absurd comedy *Being John Malkovitch* [Jonze 1999], John Malkovitch plays himself while people can enter his own mind.

The last reflexive mode Metz deals with is of course the ‘film(s) within films’ which can be related to the *mise en abyme* in written art. This concept is related to each film in which there can be: another pre-existent film being watched onscreen, the making of a film, and sometimes (in the case of franchise) scenes from another film which represent a flashback. All these

elements will be relevant, and more explicit in the third part of this research where the analysis in context might be more enlightening.

What we can prematurely consider from this point is that, due to its composite nature, cinema can communicate, in many different ways, much information that we do not especially see if we do not pay attention to it.

Now if we focus a bit more on the main cinematic unit, which would be the shot/scene, we can ask ourselves what the information that we can take from it is. Now that we have seen the late development of modern theory with enunciation, let us consider the development that the cognitive turn brought in Film and Linguistic studies: Multimodality.

1.3.2 Multimodality

Multimodality is a notion that came in the theoretical field of social sciences during the 1990s. It was a time where teachers understood that, due to the technological progress, the written mode was not enough to convey information to students. They then started to use different modes of communication which appeal to other senses such as images and sounds.

Consequently, multimodality came in social sciences, claiming that when there is a text, all the modes with which the text is presented, can have a greater influence on the person who is listening/watching. To illustrate this simply: in politics, if only the text was important, why would there be so many (and costly) campaigns with big live shows, campaign clips, badges, flyers, billboards, etc.

In his *Introduction to Multimodal Analysis* [2007], David Machin highlights different aspects on visual data that can be relevant for my research. Even if most of the corpora is made of still images, there are already many notions that have to be taken into account.

First, Machin highlights the importance of two notions about meaning that Roland Barthes coined in the 1960s, denotation and connotation. He summarized them as follows:

Denotation: this is the first layer of meaning of what that image documents. This is the literal meaning.

Connotation: this is the second layer of meaning, of what ideas and values we associate with the image. This is the hidden meaning. [Machin 2007: 27]

While the definition of denotation is quite explicit, connotation then, according to Barthes, depends upon four essential factors: poses, objects, settings, and photogenia. The only factor which might be useful for this research is 'object', since photogenia deals more with stylistic issues, and pose and settings are too much related to still images and not images in motion and time.

Machin explains that the presence of objects in a picture can carry a connotation to the entire visual message. He gives the example of the clock in news bulletins:

Why is that television programmes in general do not normally start with a clock counting down, but news often does? News bulletins around the world with the screen dominated by a large clock, a digital one in more recent versions, which counts down a few seconds to the start of the news. Normally this signals the start of a sequence of graphics, music and perhaps a voice-over telling us of the contents. The clock here transports meanings of the news being like clockwork, something regular in the natural order of time. That it has a precise start time adds to its sense of importance and precision. [Machin 2007: 33]

So the use of the most ordinary objects in a picture can carry a certain connotation which depends on the context in which it is used, which is something that we can put in parallel with Metz's reflexive elements, like mirrors.

Machin continues his explanation on the carriers of connotation by highlighting the iconographic symbolism that can be found in pictures. These elements can carry a meaning that is pre-established by the culture of the spectator. Their shape vary from the most abstract symbol to iconographic people [Machin 2007: 43]. For instance, Machin illustrates this with the

cross that symbolises Christianity, the colour blue for royalty, the mask for insincerity... In the case of the still image, this can carry an important connotation, but in the case of a film which runs twenty-four images per second, the iconographic symbolism will be relevant in a film if it is shown for a sufficiently long time, or is a recurrent object in the *syuzhet*.

I will now focus on a few notions that Machin explained in his book which might help us with the composition of a picture which can be directly related to the shot unit of cinema. The other notions for analysis are not taken into account for the reason that some can only be used for a still image that, in context, can be looked at for hours, contrary to cinema which is time dependent. In addition to this, some are looking at the ideological background that can be found in a picture, which is not the main target of this thesis.

The first important element developed by Machin is the “modality markers”. He explains firstly that this notion of modality comes from linguistics and, secondly, he makes an analogy of modality markers with words that give levels of truth of a sentence, especially modal auxiliaries. For instance, the statement *we will work on this subject* is closer to truth than the statement *we might work on this subject* or *we may work on this subject*, both expressing some uncertainty.

In this way, Machin develops a chart of eight modality scales with a brief definition:

- Degrees of the articulation of detail: a scale from the simplest line drawing to the sharpest and most finely grained photograph.
- Degrees of articulation of the background: ranging from a blank background, via lightly sketched in- or out-of-focus backgrounds, to maximally sharp and detailed background.
- Degrees of depth articulation: ranging from the absence of any depth of field to maximally deep perspective, with other possibilities in between.
- Degrees of articulation of light and shadows: ranging from zero articulation to the maximum number of degrees to the maximum number of degrees of ‘depth’ of shade, with other options in between.
- Degrees of articulation of tone: ranging from just two shades of tonal gradation, black and white (or a light and dark version of another colour), to maximum tonal gradation.
- Degrees of articulation of depth: a scale running from maximum depth articulation to simple overlapping of objects.

- Degrees of colour modulation: ranging from flat, unmodulated to the representation of all the fine nuances of a given colour.
- Degrees of colour saturation: ranging from black and white to maximally saturated colours. [Machin 2007: 57]

In my research, these different modality scales can be very useful for analysing a filmic content only if it follows certain conditions that are all attributed to what we highlighted previously: relevance. I will divide this relevance in three major points: historical, contextual and evidence.

We can talk about 'historical' relevance in terms of the time in which the filmic object was made, and so the importance of being aware of the technology of the time. This condition might seem obvious but needs to be noted. For instance, at no point the *articulation of tone* or the *colour modulation* scales should be used for a film made in the 1920s, which were all black and white films. But in such a case, the scale of *articulation of light and shadow* can become extremely relevant to analyse the possibilities of chiaroscuro in a film. For instance the lightening in *La Règle du jeu* by Jean Renoir might not be as relevant as the lightening in *Faust* by F.W. Murnau.



Figure 8 : La Règle du jeu [Renoir 1939]



Figure 9: Faust [Murnau 1926]

Yet, when some scholars use examples like the two shots above, the spectator might be asking questions such as “how did he catch this shot in particular to illustrate the whole lightening of this film?” Such a question leads us to the relevance of context and of evidence.

Relevance of context is related to the context of the spectator watching a film. It considers how the composition of shots can make a global statement on the film, in terms of

duration and occurrences. This notion is complementary with the notion of evidence. The notion of evidence means that the modality marker onscreen seems obvious for the spectator, which once again prevents us from any symptomatic reading. If we stick to the case of Murnau's *Faust*, there are many shots that play on chiaroscuro (light and darkness), they are long enough to be recorded in the mind, and the lightening of those shots is too contrasted (and requires more preparation on the set) to be considered as "intuitive". If we go then further on this hypothesis and we relate to the main *fabula* of *Faust*, which is a bet between Mephistopheles and the Archangel, we can summarize it by the metonymy "darkness vs light". In short, we can suppose that the contrasted lighting emphasizes the struggle that Faust will have to face between Good and Evil.

With such an exercise, we can sometimes speculate on the aspects of the film we can concentrate from one single screenshot, and be confirmed by watching the film. The two following screenshots taken from *La La Land* [Chazelle 2017] and *The Trial* [Welles 1962] can make us presuppose that the first film will have an underlying meaning in the colour saturation, while the other will have an underlying meaning in the depth articulation.



Figure 10: *La La Land* [Chazelle 2017]



Figure 11: *The Trial* [Welles 1967]

The second important notion that Machin coined is the relation of the viewer with the image. He looks at three aspects in which the viewer is positioned in relation to people inside the image:

Gaze: to what extent we are encouraged to engage with the participants [or characters]

Angle of interaction: this can create power relationships and also involvement.

Distance: this is like social distance, suggesting intimacy or remoteness. [Machin 2007: 110]

What Machin explains about the gaze is quite similar to what has been considered in filmic enunciation and that's why I will not focus on this; we can however summarize what Machin says: that the people depicted in the picture can be looking at the viewer or not, which changes the viewer's sensation of being addressed. I will consider firstly the broad definition made by Machin on angles and distance, and then I will put it in parallel with the definition of technical terms, retrieved in a Film studies lecture made by Stéphane Charrière.

Machin develops the notion of distance in a picture like the distance someone could have in real life experience, something that some sociolinguists call "proxemics". The distance in picture is called 'size of frame', which goes from close shots (close-up, extreme close-up...) to long shots (long shot, medium long, American shot...). Machin argues on the one hand that very long shots make a distance between the character(s) and the spectator and so the spectator can only focus on the action in its entirety. On the other hand, close shots enable the spectator to focus more on the character's emotions, to penetrate the intimacy:

This association of closeness with individualisation and intimacy of feelings reflects everyday life. When we allow people very close to us this means that we have some degree of intimacy with them. This varies between cultures, but generally we feel uncomfortable if strangers get too close. So a closer shot suggests intimacy whereas a longer shot is much more impersonal [Machin 2007: 116]

If we take for example two shots from Martin Scorsese's film *Gangs of New York* [2002], in the same scene that depicts a gang that waits just before a violent fight, we have two different size of frames, a close shot and a long shot. On both shots, there is the character named Priest Vallon (Liam Neeson). But on the long shot the focus might be more on the priest as the leader of a mass, while the close shot can focus more on the facial expression of the priest as an individual.



Figure 12: Long shot and close shot in Gangs of New York [Scorsese 2002]

This notion of distance is confirmed by the definition given by Charrière:

Long Shot: Proche du plan général [extreme long shot], il a pour fonction d'humaniser l'espace. Il permet de situer un personnage dans un ensemble de données objectives (l'espace d'arrière-plan). C'est un cadrage particulier qui permet de faire le lien entre l'individu et le collectif, l'objectif et le subjectif car il contribue à construire une atmosphère. [...]

Close Shot : Plan qui existe sous deux formes aux intentions similaires. Cadrage taille ou poitrine. Dans les deux cas, le plan rapproché a pour but de favoriser un rapport plus intime entre spectateur et personnage en soulignant des traits caractéristiques de ce dernier. La différence se situe dans le rapport psychologique au personnage : le plan taille évite de nous plonger dans la psychologie du personnage pour tendre vers un partage d'émotion. Tandis que le cadrage épaule souligne quelques points précis du psychisme de celui-ci. [Charrière 2013: 14]

We can finally relate this to the notions of denotation and connotation. What is denoted here is the gang that is ready to fight. The long-shot connotes the mass that the gang represents, while the close shot focuses on the main leaders of the gang.

Machin then explains the importance of angles in a picture, which can be horizontal, vertical or oblique. The horizontal angle could be considered as the neutral angle for a reason that it is related to the human perception. What will be important in the horizontal angle will be the position of the character, whether he is facing the spectator, looking over or turning his back on him. So it is more the position of the character that matters than the angle itself.

In picture as in real life, becoming involved with people means, literally and figuratively, 'confronting' them, coming 'face to face' with them. The side-on view is more detached, although combined with closeness it can, depending on the circumstances, index togetherness. In pictures, this translates as the (horizontal) angles: frontality and profile (and the various in between possibilities). [Machin 2007: 117]

So if the horizontal angle is the neutral angle, the other angles will be determined by the difference they make with the neutral angle. The meaning of the other angles can change in the degree of difference there is. If we take the oblique angle (a.k.a. 'Dutch angle'), which is like a tilted horizontal angle. Machin considers that this type of angle is "used to give an unsettling effect or to suggest tension." [Machin 2007: 115]. So the oblique angle presents a situation, an action, with instability. This is confirmed by Charrière's definition: "L'utilisation de ce type de cadres est rare et soulève la question de l'instabilité de l'univers des personnages qui convoquent ce type de plan. Cadrage qui tient donc du subjectif et qui évoque un effondrement ou une souffrance intérieure." [Charrière 2013: 5]

As mentioned above, the interpretation given to vertical angles vary depending on their degree. When the degree is visible but not extreme (low-angle shot, high-angle shot) and can still be compared to a real life experience (look up and look down), we can talk about a matter of power. So this type of angle can influence the status of the shown character, by the anthropomorphic sensation it gives to the viewer. The low angle shot will give to the spectator the sensation of being oppressed, and in consequence will give power to the character. The high angle shot is the opposite.

Then there are the extreme angles, the ones that cannot be related to real life experience, and that Charrière defines as "demiurgic", since they do not refer to the Creature's point of view, but to the Creator's:

On entend généralement par ce terme toute position de caméra qui échappe à une faisabilité humaine. Autrement dit, toute position de caméra que ne peut adopter naturellement un être humain relève d'une volonté singulière du metteur en scène. Il s'agit là d'assumer pleinement le propos « moral » d'une séquence ou du film. [Charrière 2013: 5]

Let us take two examples from the first sequence of *Sunset Boulevard* [Wilder 1950], in which we see William Holden's corpse in the pool. As discussed in the previous chapter the use

of the I-voice gives a demiurgic status to the spectator who can listen to the confession of a departed person. This demiurgic status is emphasized by the first shot whose angle is high, and the camera is positioned in a place where no man could naturally be. The second shot's angle is low, and comes from the pool, and so cannot be made as well by a human being or at least not with such clarity.



Figure 13: Sunset Boulevard [Wilder 1950]

From this work on modality made by Machin and the analogy we made with film studies, we can assume that the notion of real-life experience might be useful at least at the level of the shot for the perception, and perhaps on the level of motion with all the movements that can be done with a camera (dolly, pan, crane...).

From what we have seen so far, we can already consider that cinema has a language for the reason that there is information that is transmitted through a certain code. But the main difference there is between language and cinema is the construction of the system. While language is an entire abstraction of concepts, whose meaning comes with their interconnection (syntax) and respects certain rules (grammar), under two main forms (spoken/written), cinema is a composite form of language. And this composite form is freer of its construction, and is not subjected to rules, even though there are conventions. While language needs a

sentence structure to convey any message, there are components in films that are entirely based on real-life perception. The other element that we must underline is what we have explained with the enunciative theory: the message of a film is fully completed when the contextual entities enter the pattern (production and reception), and so they have to be taken into account when we consider a filmic object. So interpretation completes the meaning.

The last point that can be emphasized in what we have seen in the different theories: some of their linguistic notions can work on film, but on a different level. We can also note that each of these theories focused on one of the several components of a film, but they did not try to give a global view of the film structure. Yet, when we watch a film, it is the complete object that we watch. So in order to widen our perspective on film, I will now consider the different dimensions that constitute a film, and which can be united in a single schema.

2 METHODOLOGY AND CORPUS

Before we start to observe the different dimensions of the hexadimensional pattern, there are several notions that have to be underlined, since they can be present in each dimension. Let us call them “interdimensional factors”.

Some of these different factors have already been developed in the previous section, but will be also reminded, for the sake of clarity.

2.1 Methodology : main factors

2.1.1 Diegesis, Fabula, Syuzhet and Deixis

When we approached the cognitive turn with Bordwell we uncovered the principles of *fabula* and *syuzhet*: the first one which represents the “raw plot”, so the main idea of the story told, the second one which represents the *fabula* encoded in a motion picture. Then there is the *diegesis*, which is defined as follows:

Diegesis, an analytic term used in modern *NARRATOLOGY to designate the narrated event or *STORY (French, *HISTOIRE) as a ‘level’ distinct from that of the *NARRATION. The diegetic level of a narrative is that of the main story, whereas the ‘higher’ level at which the story is told is extradiegetic (standing outside the sphere of the main story). [*Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*]

In the case of fiction film, which is my main framework, this notion of *diegesis* is crucial in order to make the difference between what is *diegetic* (or *intra-diegetic*) and what is *extra-diegetic*. The best example can be found in a film soundtrack, where the music is usually *extra-diegetic*, since we do not see the source of the music, so the music is present for the spectator only. In the case of *intra-diegetic* soundtrack, there is the presence of the source in the picture, for instance the presence of a band in a party, or a jukebox that starts playing when Fonzie hits it.

So this notion of *diegesis* has its importance to make the difference between what belongs to the story’s universe, and what is directly related to the spectator.

Finally there is the *deixis*, which firstly articulates the *diegesis*, then secondly organizes the *syuzhet*. It corresponds to the main elements that constitute the content of a sequence, *ego*, *hic* and *nunc*, so in other terms *who*, *what*, *where* and *when*. If we take a look at the first material of a film, which is the screenplay (or *scenario*), the whole story is organized according to these elements. Indeed, in a screenplay, each sequence starts with some information that enables the reader to visualize it. Let us take for example an extract from Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight*, with two sequences that follow each other.


Screenplay	Sequences
<p>EXT. BALLET -- NIGHT</p> <p>Rachel and Dent arrive to find the box office SHUTTERED. A sign: 'PERFORMANCE CANCELED.' A newspaper story is taped to the glass. Over a picture of BRUCE WAYNE ON A YACHT:</p> <p>LOVE BOAT- Billionaire absconds with entire Moscow ballet.</p> <p>EXT. DECK, WAYNE'S YACHT, THE CARIBBEAN -- DAY</p> <p>Alfred, picks his way over twelve SUNBATHING BALLERINAS. Wayne looks up from a newspaper. Alfred points to a SEA-PLANE gently touching down across the bay.</p> <p>ALFRED I believe your plane is here.</p> <p>WAYNE</p>	

Figure 14: Shots and screenplay extracted from *The Dark Knight* [Nolan 2008]

From this extract, we can see that in these indications, there is already the presence of the *hic* and the *nunc*. The *nunc* is usually quite simple (e.g. DAY/NIGHT/EVENING...) and gives us a broad idea of the time. If it needs to be more precise, it will be presented onscreen, in a *diegetic* way (e.g. the clock of a bomb running through) or in an *extra-diegetic* way, with the written indication (e.g. intertitles, subtitles).

On the contrary, the *hic* is more developed, since in the *diegesis*, there can be many sets on the same location. So the *hic* starts with a first dichotomy between “exterior” and “interior”, then is divided in the main location (e.g. WAYNE MANOR), which is subdivided in more precise sets (e.g. LIVING ROOM; KITCHEN...).

And finally the *ego* is presented in the description of the scene, where there is usually one or many characters (e.g. Alfred, Batman, Bruce Wayne...). If there is no character in a sequence, the *ego* will become the main object to be focused on.

I must add to this part that in the situation of a sequence without a character, the spectator will always focus on what is closer to his human nature (i.e. principle of empathy). Like the hierarchy of genre that has been developed in painting, the spectator will focus firstly on a character with which he can identify, then if there are no characters, his look will focus on the living onscreen (animals, plants) , and then on the non-living (objects, landscape).

Yet, some elements in a scene might just participate to the decorum and have no special goal to interpretation. In order to make the difference, I must recall the broad notion of relevance, and the main dichotomy of sequences.

2.1.2 Relevance and cognitive activity

The notion of relevance that we discussed earlier is one of the best ways to avoid the risk of symptomatic reading. As in Literature and other arts, some critics happen to be quite far-fetched, and lose the main theme of the film to the benefit of a few elements that fit with their own critical theory. One of the latest examples that can be taken into account is the controversy on the internet which accused the 90s sitcom *Friends* of being homophobic, sexist and “fat-phobic”. Such allegations are made despite the sitcom’s success and the period in which it was broadcasted, and the number of occurrences is quite low in comparison to the other jokes.

Therefore, when I consider the film and series of the corpus, the elements that will be taken into consideration will need to have occurrences or a certain duration, and will not be

taken out of context, especially in the case of *Twin Peaks*, in which there are twenty five years between the film and the third season.

The second aspect that will be important for the schema is the two main types of cognitive activities that the spectator can have when watching films and series. We concluded with Bordwell that the spectator's mind is always active, but this cognitive activity can have a double nature. The first one is the activity of reflection (in the sense of thinking), which concerns all the audio-visual content that brings the spectator to a possible consideration of the film in parallel of the *diegesis*. This type of *mise-en-scène* can be related especially to the notion of relevance, since they need duration and occurrences to be assimilated in the mind of the spectator.

The second activity can be considered as the sensory activity. This kind of activity could be considered by some theorists as the "passive viewing" since there is no reflexion on what is shown, to the benefit of a certain empathy of the action that is shown. In the case of sequences that do not respect the principle of relevance, where there are no special occurrences. When shots are short in their duration, they have to be taken in their entirety and for the sensation they suggest. If we take for instance one of the many car chases in Paul Greengrass' *the Bourne Ultimatum*, this type of sequence plays with our perception to feel more in the action (*Figure 15*). The main goal of such a sequence is to create a dynamic tension that emphasizes the suspense of the endangered hero. This can be put in parallel with Casetti's notion of "subjective shot", where there is identification with the character. So the shots are short, their distance is close to the filmed characters and there is a rhythmic background music. This is very different from the usual dynamic of a car chase a spectator might watch in real life. For instance, if there is a live car chase in the news bulletin, it will be presented in a single shot from a helicopter (i.e. unreal objective), which shows the car chase from far away. So this type of shot is more

informative (as the news is supposed to be) and so regards a reflexive activity, contrary to *The Bourne Ultimatum*, which **regards** a sensory activity.



Figure 15: Car Chase in *The Bourne Ultimatum* [Greengrass 2008] (left)
Car chase broadcasted on ABC (right)

2.1.3 References to other arts and references to cinema

Even if referring to other arts is common, the composite nature of cinema makes the particularity that all the other arts can be referred to a single piece, but on different dimensions. Thereby, cinema is directly inspired by the arts that preceded it. The reference to written arts (literature, poetry) in its genesis (screenplay), performing arts with the presence of comedians (drama, dance) and visual arts (painting, photography) seems quite obvious. Yet, we can add also the other arts that seem less obvious: when we consider film genres with an unreal or anachronic universe (expressionist films, science-fiction, and peplums), they need major arts such as architecture and sculpture to create the illusion of another reality. Let us take for instance the studios of Cinecittà in which there is a whole reconstruction of Ancient Rome's forum, or the famous Babylonia setting of D.W. Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916).

Music was first a way to illustrate a sequence of silent films, but became more independent with the arrival of synchronic sound, and can have its own underlying meaning that I will consider in the next subsection.

Finally, we can also consider that cinema **refers sometimes** to the arts that followed its creation. If we put in parallel cinema with comic books (cartoons, graphic novels, mangas...), both share the same architecture of successive shots, with different angles and levels of distance, and are organised in a sort of editing. We can note the similarity of the editing in the adaptation of some comics, for instance Robert Rodriguez's film adaptation of Frank Miller's *Sin City* (Figure 16)



Figure 16: *Sin City* [Rodriguez 2005] and *Sin City* [Miller 1991]

We also mentioned in the first part the film *Hardcore Henry* (2016) whose shots were entirely subjective (or POV). When we see a screenshot, we can relate it directly to a genre in videogames known as “First-person-shooter” where the spectator/player shares the main character’s point-of view.

There are cases in which the articulation of some of these elements are gathered in a sequence and become so famous that it becomes “cult”. It becomes so famous that even the people who have not seen the film might know the sequence; for instance, Alfred Hitchcock’s “shower scene” in *Psycho* became famous with this sequence of Janet Leigh screaming while being stabbed in the shower by a shadow, in a black and white format, with an extreme quick editing, and of course Bernard Hermann’s strident song that goes between music and noise. In such cases we could speak of a filmic idiom, since only this articulation of the different elements creates the reference to the sequence. We can also consider a sequence as idiomatic at the moment it is parodied in another film, especially in satirist cartoon like *The Simpsons*.

2.2 The hexadimensional pattern (6-dimension pattern)

Now that we have approached the different factors that have to be taken into account for film analysis let us consider the different dimensions that exist in a film, which starts with the shot and ends with the context of the film production. This presentation of a film under several dimensions is made for the reason that since there are no strict grammatical rules, the meaning of a film can be more present in one dimension than the other, depending on the director's style, and the story shown.

2.2.1 First Dimension: the shot

We can consider the shot as the smallest dimension of a film on the account that the first film ever shot was *La Sortie de l'usine Lumière à Lyon*, made by Louis Lumière in 1895. The main features of this film are: motion picture, with a static frame, without any cut or music, and no narrative structure. Deprived of any storytelling or information, we can also consider *l'Arroseur arrosé* [Lumière 1895] as the first fiction film, in which the gag makes the story.

Whatever the scholar considers as the first film, we can assume from both films that, due to their history, the shot is the minimal unit of a film. The elements which constitute a shot can be divided in two parts, firstly the content, or *what* we talk about, secondly the construction which regards *how* we talk about it.

The content concerns mostly the *diegesis* and the *deixis*. Who are the characters onscreen? Where are they? When does the action take place? And what are they doing? As in language, the content is an open class. There is an infinite number of combinations, and so they cannot have a global structure, even if some recurrences in the history of cinema created some conventions, as we have seen for instance with the presence of mirrors in Metz's enunciative

theory. So the analysis of the content depends entirely on the corpora, and so it will be analysed more precisely in the third part of this thesis.

Then there is the construction of the shot, which concerns the way the *diegesis* is represented onscreen. As we have seen with Machin's modality markers, the construction of a shot can influence the spectator's perception. Even if the diegetic elements are denotative as they are on the script, they become more connotative in their construction.

We already saw some of the connotative components of the shot with David Machin that are the distance and the angles (*Figure 17*). The underlying connotation is mostly based upon our real-life experience of perception. So the distance goes from the farthest distance from the character (extreme long shot) where only the *hic* and *nunc* are clearly visible, to the closest proximity (extreme close-up) to the character which erases the *hic* and *nunc* in favour to the character's body part.

The levels of angle depends upon the human feasibility of the shot. As their name in the jargon tells, the bird's eye view and the worm's eye view are more related to non-human vision, while the high and low angles can easily be done by a human being.

The last component of the shot that must be considered is the three-dimension axes that were coined by Jennifer Van Sjill in *Cinematic Storytelling*:

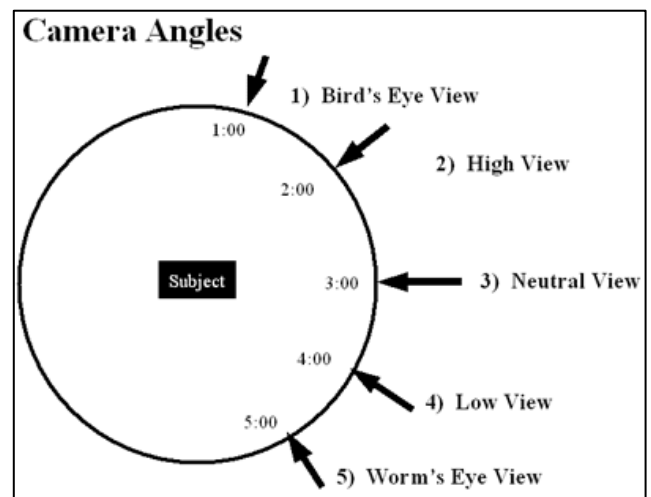


Figure 17: Camera Angles [GCSE Revision]

X-axis is the line cutting horizontally the picture. Objects can move from the left to the right and vice-versa along this axis.

Y-axis is the line cutting vertically the picture. Objects can go up and down along this axis.

Z-axis goes from the foreground to the background and vice-versa. This axis gives the audience the sensation of the third dimension, or depth of field. [Van Sjill 2005: 2]

These three dimension axes might seem ordinary, since they represent the three dimensions of perception that have already been considered, notably in painting. But Van Sjill mentioned an important notion which is the object's movement on the axes, which can only be made in motion pictures, and consider the connotation they can carry. We can put in parallel the movement on the X- and Y-axes with the connotative meaning that directions have in Western culture. Concerning the X-axis, Machin explains the connotation there can be in language, at least in English, where the syntax is based on the left-right direction. Terms or elements on the left are related to the "give", so to the past, while elements on the right are related to the "new" so to the future. [Machin 2007: 139-140]

In such terms, if there is a character in a shot who walks from the left to the right, it would seem normal, natural. While if a character goes from the right to the left, it would seem unnatural, unfamiliar. The same connotative phenomenon is present in the Y-axis. In the book *Metaphors we live by* [1980], Lakoff and Johnson argued that metaphors structure our views and perceptions. Lakoff and Johnson approach a subcategory of metaphors named "orientational metaphors", which, in Judeo-Christian cultures, relates the "up" to "Heaven", so something with good connotations, while the "down" is related to "Hell", and so to something bad. So when a character moves up on the Y-axis, there will be a sensation of improvement. Whereas when a character goes down, there will be a connotation of collapse.

Finally, there is less connotative meaning in the Z-axis, which is more related to the perception of distance, due to its different degrees of depth. The degrees of the depth of field will depend upon the type of focal length the camera lenses have. Conventionally, lenses with a shallow depth of field (e.g. telephoto) will be used for close shots (e.g. portraits, inserts), where the object is rendered without any distortions and with no clear background; and lenses with a deep depth of field (e.g. fisheye) will be used for long shots (e.g. landscapes) where all the elements in the picture are clear, with sometimes a small distortion due to the shape of the

lenses. Yet, some shots do the contrary, which creates another perception of the scene, especially with movement on the Z-axis.

Before going any further we can sum up the notion of the depth as follows:

Type of focal	Depth of field	Type of lenses
Long focal length	LESS	Telephoto
Short focal length	MORE	Fisheye
Variable focal length	Variable	Zoom

Figure 18: Types of focal

If we take for instance the shot from *The Graduate* [Mike Nichols 1967], where Dustin Hoffman is running on the Z-axis from the background to the foreground, the use of a shallow depth of field creates the impression that the man stagnates even though he is running. While on the opposite, if we have a close shot with a deep depth of field a character seems to cross a very long distance in just a few steps. In a fight scene of *Raising Arizona* [Coen 1987], the character portrayed by Nicolas Cage is beaten up, and tries to hide under a car. But the villain grabs his foot and pulls him out of the car. In this shot, the main character seems to be pulled on a long distance while it is nothing but the width of a car, and it contributes to making the shot funnier than it would be in reality. The distance goes from a close-up to a medium long shot in less than four seconds. On the contrary to the shot from *The Graduate* where it takes about seventeen seconds to go from a long shot to a medium shot, and needed a change of focus on Dustin Hoffmann.



Figure 19: Short focal / deep depth of field *Raising Arizona* [Coen 1987]



Figure 20: long focal/shallow depth of field in *The Graduate* [Nichols, 1967]

In short, the counter-use of the depth of fields in these two films adds a connotation that contributes to the main genre of the film. On the one hand, *The Graduate* is a romantic drama, where the final sequence is about interrupting a wedding before the bride says “yes”, the use of this type of lenses emphasizes the suspense of time running. On the other hand, *Raising Arizona*, is a comedy inspired by cartoons, whose violence is so excessive and unrealistic that there can be no sympathy for the characters, in favour of laughter.

2.2.2 Second dimension: the frame

What makes the second dimension particular is its similarity with the shot. But here, the concern is not anymore about the components and movements that are within the frame, but the ones that are around the frame. In other terms, what is about the camera, and not what the camera shows. This dimension can be divided into three major components which are movement, filters, sound and the written modes.

We can firstly consider the usual movements that can be made by a camera (*Figure 21*) and the different meanings they can convey. Then we will consider the “special movements” that can be made, such as the crane or the Steadicam.

As we can see, the main movements can be divided into two main types. There is firstly the physical movements that can be made by a displacement of the camera on its tripod by the means of a platform with wheels (dolly, crab, boom...). Secondly, there is the mental movements of the camera that can be made with a simple rotation of the camera on the tripod (pan, tilt). If we go back to the parallel with real-life experiences, one is closer

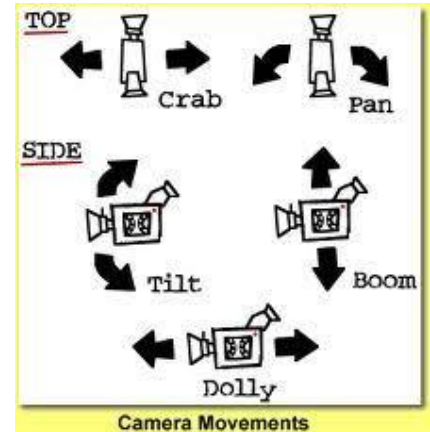


Figure 21: Camera movements [GCSE Revision]

to what a human being is capable of doing with his own feet, while the other one is closer to the movement a human being can do with his head. There is no need to explain each movement, since their meaning is dependent on the different characteristics of the first dimension (angles, 3D-axes, distance). Thus, let us consider the general meaning of the two main movements made by Charrière before considering the special movements.

Pan : Un panoramique [pan] est un choix de mise en scène qui force le spectateur à observer un espace filmique pour s'en faire une idée. C'est donc un mouvement de la cérébralité lié à une dimension cosmogonique. [...] Dans le cas d'un panoramique vertical [tilt shot], si celui-ci est assujéti à la découverte d'un être humain, il a pour fonction principale de souligner l'importance du personnage dans la dramaturgie du film et aux yeux de celui qui convoque le panoramique.

Dolly : Mouvement presque contraire au panoramique. Le travelling est par essence un déplacement physique à travers l'espace. Ce déplacement peut s'effectuer vers l'avant, l'arrière [dolly shot], la latéralité [crab shot] ou la verticalité [boom shot]. [...] Le sens et la fonction d'un travelling dépend de son orientation géographique, de la taille du cadre avec lequel s'effectue le mouvement et de l'angle de caméra choisi (plongée/contreplongée auteur d'homme, etc. [high angle, low angle, neutral angle, etc.]). [Charrière 2013: 1]

Thus, Charrière's definition confirms that camera movements depend on the deixis, such as in a sentence, an adjective or an adverb must be attributed to a noun and a verb.

The special movements are the movements which require a precise technology in order to be made, and so can create point of views that cannot be made by a human being, like the demiurgic angles. The crane and Steadicam⁴ shots are named after the material used for the movement, and give the possibility to create very complex movements, such as one-take movies like the aforementioned *Russian Ark*.

The last special movement is the zoom, which is the technique that consists in changing the distance of the shot from and to the filmed object (zoom-out and zoom-in) without having to move, nor rotate the camera. Charrière defines this technique as “antinaturalistic” since it reproduces a movement that cannot be done with human eyes (on the contrary to some animals like hawks): “Le zoom est associé à une focalisation de l’esprit sur un objet ou autre qui monopolise l’attention de celui qui convoque le mouvement.” [Charrière 2013: 4] So the movement made by the zoom is similar to the dolly shot in effect, but is different in nature. While the dolly is a physical movement which moves its whole apparatus to get closer to the filmed object, the zoom changes its focal length to be closer to the filmed object.

In his 1958 movie *Vertigo*, Alfred Hitchcock played on this difference between the zoom and the dolly and created something called the dolly-zoom (a.k.a “vertigo effect”). This type of zoom consists in making a shot with a dolly-in and a zoom-out at the same time (or the opposite) and creates a shot where the distance with the filmed object does not change, on the contrary to the depth of field which is distorted. Such a shot creates a sensation of instability, dizziness to the spectator and, according to Charrière, expresses the character’s internal state, it shows more what he feels than what he does [Charrière 2013: 3].

⁴ Steadicam : C’est un système de stabilisation de la prise de vue qui permet une fluidité naturaliste du travelling. L’utilisation de ce harnais sur lequel se fixe une caméra a pour fonction essentielle d’allonger la possibilité d’enregistrement de la prise de vue dans le cas de mouvements très complexes. Ce principe donne une dimension organique au travelling puisque cela reproduit l’exacte appréhension visuelle d’un espace traversé par un être humain. [Charrière 2013: 4]

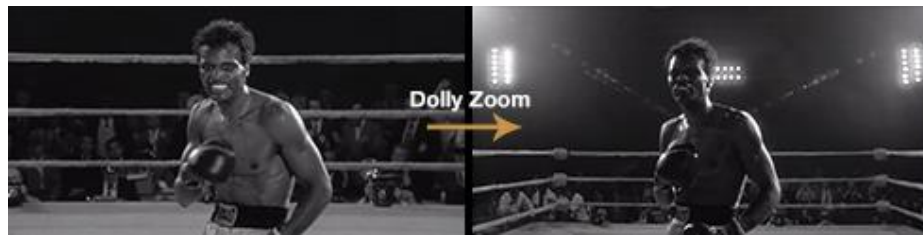


Figure 22: dolly zoom in *Raging Bull* [Scorsese 1980]

Now that we have considered the different movements that can be made with the camera, let us consider the two other modes that constitute the frame which are the written mode and the sound, the former that we overviewed in the previous part with Metz's "impersonal enunciation", and end this dimension with the off-screen.

The written mode in the second dimension can only be the subtitles (since the intertitles are related to editing), and their extra-diegetic use is mostly explanatory of the *diegesis*, and more specifically the dialogues in foreign languages. So the situations when the subtitles have a more stylistic pattern are the ones where they are absent while they are needed.

To stay on the situation of scenes with a foreign language, if there are no subtitles, the main intention concerns the spectator's viewing. This situation leads the spectator to focus his gaze on the action onscreen instead of the dialogues. We can find such an omission in Wes Anderson's latest movie *Isle of Dogs* [Anderson, 2018] in which the story sets in Japan. While the main characters, the dogs, speak English, the Japanese characters speak Japanese without any extra-diegetic subtitles that provide the translation. The only translations that can be found are the ones made by diegetic characters (such as interpreters). In such a situation, the spectator is then pushed to focus on the character's paralinguage and voice intonation.

This leads us to the last element of the second dimension of film, which is sound. This mode can be divided in two parts: onscreen sound and off-screen sound.

Onscreen sound is the sound that has its reference onscreen. According to Metz there is what he calls *son phonétique* which is the dialogues, and the *bruit* which is all the other sounds that are attributed to objects that are onscreen (e.g. a gun firing onscreen with the sound of the detonation). Both of those sounds are made to create a verisimilitude of the shot with reality. Once again, onscreen sound will have another meaning when it loses its verisimilitude of real-life experience, especially by means of a modulation of sound, or by its absence (e.g. a soundless shot in a sound film). So the possibilities of expression with onscreen sound are quite limited, contrary to off-screen sound.

Previously, we discussed the off-scene sound as a mode of address to the spectator, notably with what Metz called the *I-voice*, so the presence of a narrator who can be *diegetic* or *extra-diegetic*, related or unrelated to a character onscreen. But there are other types of off-screen sounds that are not *extra-diegetic* nor narrative, and which we will call “off-frame”, in order to make the difference with the hyperonym “off-screen”.

Off-frame sound is indirectly related to the image onscreen, since it gives a sound that is not present in the frame. Consequently it expands the diegetic universe out of what is shown. To keep the example of the gunshot sound, lots of films used this mode with shots where the character onscreen hears and reacts to the gunshot sound. Even if the gunshot is not shown, it seems clear for the spectator that it is part of the *diegesis* and that the consequences of the gunshot (e.g. a corpse) will be shown later on.

So this type of sound gives us the opportunity to discuss an important component of cinema which is the off-screen. Charrière defines the off-screen as follows:

On entend par ce terme tout ce qui excède les limites visibles du cadre. Le terme Hors-champ désigne aussi bien ce qui relève du visible, que de l'audible ou même du concept. Certains cinéastes n'utilisent absolument pas le hors-champ (Hitchcock, Murnau...) car pour eux, le cadre est l'incarnation du monde filmique dans lequel s'inscrit tout ce qui est à voir, entendre et comprendre.

D'autres, plus nombreux, utilisent le hors champ pour plusieurs raisons : susciter la participation active du spectateur, inscrire la fiction dans un monde plus vaste, jouer avec la notion de réalité, ou encore introduire des sensations complexes ou subjectives comme beauté, grandeur, angoisse ou autres. [Charrière 2013: 7]

Considering this definition, we can speculate that the off-frame is directly related to what Bordwell defended about the spectator who completes the *syuzhet* by its own cognitive activity. In short, we could say that the off-frame gives indirect elements that suggest an action that is completed by the spectator, especially actions that can be considered as shocking or inappropriate such as sex and violence. These latter cases are nowadays (in Western culture) rated for certain audiences (Rated-R, -PG, -X...) but were censored in the past. The most famous period of censorship happened in the United States, from the 1930s to the mid-60s, with the Hays code, which forbade any picture that could lower the moral standards of those who see it, especially at that time: sex, nudity, violence, "deviance" and probably Marxist ideology.

This is how the off-screen became an ingenious technique to suggest an action without showing it. But why then did some directors continue to use in their *mise en scène* the off-screen with the international liberation of morals, which permitted to show onscreen outrageous violence (e.g. *Bonnie and Clyde*) or explicit sexual intercourse (e.g. *Last tango in Paris*)? Perhaps for some it was prudishness, for some others they understood that the simple fact of playing with the unseen leads the spectator to reconstruct the action with its own knowledge and emotions.

Moreover, especially in horror/thriller films, it permitted the film to avoid special effects that would quickly look obsolete, and so lose their horrific effect. We can note this use of suggestion in Steven Spielberg's first film *Duel*, whose *fabula* is about a man driving his car as he is pursued by a truck that he casually overtook. One of the high components of the film's *syuzhet* is that the man who drives the truck is never entirely shown, in favour of parts of him like his boots, and more evidently the truck itself. This example highlights that the simple fact

of suggesting can create the concept in the spectator's mind, in the manner of a metonymy. It becomes even more obvious concerning sexual intercourse, notably in *Titanic* [Cameron 1998] with a shot on the car in which Rose and Jack are making love, in which just the hand of Rose up against the car's window suggests the orgasm (*Figure 23*)



Figure 23: Off-screen action in Titanic [Cameron 1998]

To conclude on the frame, we can say that this dimension deals, on the one hand, with the different movements related or unrelated to real-life experience, and on the other hand with the dichotomy of the onscreen (what is directly shown), and the off-screen (what is suggested) made by different modes.

So now that we have approached the two main dimensions that constitute a film unit (inside and outside the frame), let us now consider how those different types of shots are coordinated with each other and the main different meanings that their addition can convey: the montage.

2.2.3 Third dimension: the montage

Firstly, “montage” means “the technique of selecting, editing and piecing together separate sections of film to form a continuous whole” (*Oxford Dictionary*), and the name of the process subsequently became also the name of the aesthetic result, which is the one that interests us. For the sake of clarity, the term “editing” will be used to deal with the conventional process, while “montage” will be used to define the aesthetic process. As we have seen with Metz and Carroll, there have been many different theories on editing that were looking for a certain rule of montage, and that sometimes contradicted each other. The main purpose of this

part is to consider the main different types of meaning the addition of two or more shots can create.

In the history of cinema, there are so many types of montage that it would take too much time to be exhaustive. We could summarize editing as filmic punctuation and coordination. It creates a rhythm, a fluidity between the shots, and marks the end and the beginning of a sequence. So we will consider editing under two notions, the notion of clear coordination, made with clear cut(s)⁵, and then some of the different effects of transition that can be made to create subordination or mark the end of a sequence.

As the word presupposes, the editing can be seen as the conjunction of two shots, which can be additive (AND), alternate (OR) or oppositional (BUT). In each type of editing there is at least one literal meaning that synthetizes the two shots ($1+1=2$), and sometimes there is another metaphorical concept that is created from the two shots ($1+1=3$).

If we consider the additive montage, it can simply illustrate a conversation between two characters. In the thriller movie *Heat* [Mann, 1995] there is a dialogue scene between Al Pacino and Robert DeNiro. This scene is made of two shots (*Figure 24*), each shot that corresponds to the one who is talking, it is also known as the shot/reverse shot. But there is another type of additive montage which creates an implicit concept from the two shots. If we refer again to the notion of suggestion that we saw with the off-screen, some additive montages can implicitly express concepts that were considered as inappropriate onscreen. For instance, in Alfred Hitchcock's *North by Northwest*, the two final shots show first Cary Grant kissing Eva Marie Saint in a train, and then a shot of the train entering a tunnel. With the use of a metaphor, we can suppose the sexual innuendo of such a final montage (*Figure 25*).

⁵ Cut: "an immediate transition from one scene [or shot] to another in a film." [*Oxford Dictionary*]



Figure 24: Heat [Mann 1995]



Figure 25: North by Northwest [Hitchcock 1957]

The alternate montage is a type of editing which is similar to the shot/reverse shot on the principle that both shots represent the same time unit (*nunc*). What makes the main difference though is that the *hic* of both shots is different, but they converge around the same event. This type of montage is commonly used for sequences in which there is a countdown, like in the campus comedy *National Lampoon's Van Wilder* [Becker 2002] where the main character [Ryan Reynolds] is running late for an exam. This sequence is made of two shots, one is the character running, and one is the exam classroom which is about to be closed by the teacher (Figure 26). Of course the sequence ends with the collision of the two space units into the same shot, right on time as the off-frame sound of the clock chimes implies.



Figure 26: Alternate montage in National Lampoon's Van Wilder [Becker 2002]

The parallel montage is a bit more complex since it gathers the principle of the third implicit concept of the additive montage and the space-time division of the alternate montage. The parallel montage shows at least two shots that are not commonly related in *ego*, *hic* and *nunc* and which do not converge in a third shot. They converge conceptually in an implicit notion that the spectator creates with his cognitive activity. This type of editing has been developed by the Soviet film theorists who considered the two main effects it would create on the spectator.

First there was Lev Kulechov who considered the emotional effect the editing could create (known as the “Kulechov effect”) by showing the audience the same shot of a man with a neutral expression and then the second shot which was different (*Figure 27*). There was a plate of food in the first, a coffin in the second and a beautiful woman in the third. For each sequence, the audience gave a different interpretation of the man’s emotions. The first one expressed hunger, the second one expressed sadness, and the third lust. So from the same shot, the parallel editing can suggest different emotions.



Figure 27: “Kulechov effect” [Kulechov 1921]

But in opposition to the emotional response, Sergei M. Eisenstein argued that parallel montage could be made to imply an intellectual reaction in the spectator’s mind. In his first film *Strike* [1924], made for the Soviet government, he developed the parallel montage with the intent to convey the communist ideology. One of the clearest examples can be found in the last sequence which overlaps shots of the strikers who have been shot by the tsarists (the story is set in 1912), with shots of an animal being slaughtered (*Figure 28*). The underlying meaning is that the strikers have been treated like animals in a slaughterhouse, massacred.



Figure 28: Parallel montage in *Strike* [Eisenstein 1924]

Now if we consider the parallel montage beyond the propagandists’ intentions, many contemporary directors used this type of editing to create an underlying meaning. For instance, in the first opus of *The Godfather*, Francis F. Coppola makes a parallel montage of Michael Corleone in the church, christening his future godson, and several sequences that depict the

“godfathers” of the rival families being killed. The interesting fact of these sequences is first the association of what is said in the church, which is a renouncement to Satan, and what is done outside the church with assassinations ordered by Corleone. And this parallel language plays on the polysemy of the word “godfather” which means firstly in the film “head of a mob family”, but here it plays between this figurative meaning, and the literal meaning with Michael christening his nephew. We can add that what emphasizes the synchronicity of the events is the continuous voice of the priest, which is *intra-diegetic* during the christening scenes, and *extra-diegetic* in the killing scenes.



Figure 29: parallel montage in *The Godfather* (Coppola 1972)

The last element of montage that we can focus on is the superimposition. This effect of montage is particular since the aesthetic result is not made by a shot following another shot but by the superimposition of a nearly transparent shot on another shot. According to Charrière, the meaning of superimposition is: “Cela donne une dimension réflexive à l’action et reflète l’idée d’une pensée en mouvement.” [Charrière 2013: 10] This type of montage can then convey the association of two notions in a single shot. We can take for instance the example of F.W. Murnau’s *Sunrise* [1927] in which at the beginning, a woman from the city seduces a married farmer and induces him to kill his wife. There is a scene in which the farmer looks at his wife taking care of the children, we see the shot of the man with a superimposition of the mistress taking care of the man onscreen, like a ghost. This expresses the farmer’s thoughts that are influenced by the city woman.



Figure 30: *Sunrise* [Murnau 1927]

So there is usually a notion closer to subordination with superimposition, since the imposed image is directly related to the action of the first shot. The existence of the second shot is entirely subordinated to the first one.

There are many other effects that are used for the transition between two shots, but those are commonly used to mark a change of sequence, which is the next dimension we will approach now. In short, montage is the dimension that creates the rhythm of a sequence, but also permits to express an underlying meaning created by the association of two or more shots.

2.2.4 Fourth dimension: the sequence

Like chapters in literature, the sequence segments the film and gives it a certain structure, from the first draft to the final cut, as we saw with the extract from *The Dark Knight*. In short, the sequence is an addition of different shots (montage) that finds its beginning and its end when there is a change in the deixis. Deixis is fundamental in this dimension because it marks the change of sequence, notably in the *hic* and the *nunc*. The change of sequence can be explicit, as we saw with the written mode in *Dunkirk* which indicates the *hic* and the *nunc*, but also implicit with some visual clues, like the usual extreme long shot of a place that is not related to the sequence that preceded it.

Concerning *ego* and *nunc*, the first one can be visually understood with the change of character (e.g. a sequence with the villain that follows a sequence with the hero), while the second one will have difficulty to show time precisely, time being a notion with no reference but metonymic or metaphoric. Therefore, time can be expressed with *diegetic* elements such as recurrent shots of a clock, or can be speculated by the spectator with the continuity of light. For instance if there is first a day sequence, then a night sequence, and then again a day sequence, we can speculate that one day has passed in the *diegesis*.

Yet, there are a few directors who prefer to mark explicitly the change of sequences, especially with the written mode. We already saw the use of the subtitles which is a subtle way of marking the change of sequence, but some directors prefer to mark it more evidently with the use of intertitles.

For the *ego*, the intertitle will be used at the beginning of a sequence that introduces a new character. We can see that in *Elephant* [Van Sant 2002] where the *syuzhet* presents the life of different characters before a gunfight in a high school. Each intertitle gives the name of the character and the shot that follows shows the mentioned character onscreen. At the moment we understand this information, each time the camera will follow another character we will implicitly understand the change of sequence.

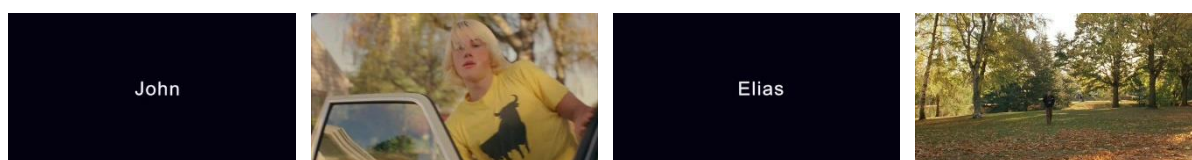


Figure 31: ego markers in *Elephant* [Van Sant 2002]

The same pattern is used to express time in films, in order to indicate the diegetic time, for instance in the film *La Haine* by Mathieu Kassovitz [1995], which presents the wanderings of three youngsters of the ghetto in twenty four hours. The film is segmented in time to inform the spectator that it is the same day. These intertitles are emphasized with the off-frame sound that does the ticking of a clock, like a countdown before the violent climax.

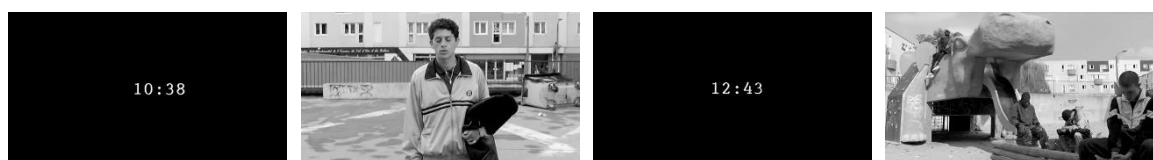


Figure 32: nunc markers in *La Haine* [Kassovitz 1995]

There are then many ways to articulate a sequence, with the deixis but also in its duration (e.g. 3 min; 20 min...) or in its particularity of being made with just one shot (i.e. the sequence shot). But there is one type of sequence that can be highlighted for its particularity of being structured on a mode that has not been uncovered yet, music, with musical scenes.

In the history of cinema, music was first a way to illustrate silent films. Since synchronic sound did not exist in the first ages of cinema, music was a way to give rhythm to films. So in theatres there was the film projected with a score that was played, sometimes by a piano player, sometimes by an entire orchestra. But when synchronic sound was coined, music kept its illustrative function to emphasize the action, but also became the main articulation of some sequences, especially in certain genres like musicals.

Yet, there are some films that are not musicals but which have a sequence which is articulated around a certain track and do not need deictic markers. This type of sequence is known as sequence montage (or “training montage”), which became famous at the beginning of the late 1970s with films like *Rocky* and *Scarface*. In these movies, the sequence montage is made to summarize a certain period of *diegetic* time in a short duration, which permits to gather all the main events that happened in this period of time. Even if the songs are taken for their rhythmic tone, the song title that is usually repeated with the chorus is also related to the actions onscreen. In the case of *Rocky* [Avildsen 1976] where the eponymous character is improving in his training for his next boxing fight, the song *Gonna Fly Now* shows the progress the boxer does. It is the same phenomenon for *Scarface* [De Palma 1983], with the song *Push it to the limits* where the montage sequence shows the social ascent of the main character, Tony Montana. This scene is even more explicit of this power takeover with the recurrent inserts of a counting machine which represents the money earned with the sales of drugs.

We can then understand that the dimension of the sequence deals especially with the deixis as the organisation of the film’s structure, and in a certain way, its *syuzhet*. On a more pragmatic perspective, when someone wants to talk about a certain sequence, he will use the deixis to remind which sequence he talks about to the interlocutor. We can even go further on this principle with the arrival of home film supports (DVDs, Blu-ray) whose chapters in the menu usually respect the division of sequences.

But when a discussion about a film takes a more intellectual turn, the way one will talk about a film will be about the different themes that constitute it. And here, we enter the fifth dimension: Film in co-text.

2.2.5 Fifth dimension: film in co-text

Like the previous dimension was closer to the syntactic view of film defended by Metz, the fifth dimension has a closer approach to Bordwell's theories. As we saw with the latter, the full comprehension of a film can only be reached at the moment the film has been watched entirely. When the viewing is done, only a few parts of the film are remembered by the spectator, and these few parts are usually the ones that will constitute the main themes of the film. This follows our assumption of relevance in a film where only the recurrent and/or obvious themes can constitute a solid critical view on a film, and avoid the chances of symptomatic reading.

The themes can be divided in two major parts that even if different in nature, are complementary in their interpretative function. On the one hand, there are the diegetic themes that are directly related to the plot, the story; while on the other hand there are the stylistic themes, related to how the *fabula* is presented onscreen, so the *syuzhet*. When these themes have elements that are close to other films, we can start to attribute them to genres⁶ and subgenres.

The website *filmsite.org* considers eleven main film genres that all have their own subgenres: Action, Adventure, Comedy, Crime/Gangster, Drama, Epics/Historical, Horror, Musicals/Dance, Science-Fiction, War and Westerns. They define genre as follows:

They are broad enough to accommodate practically any film ever made, although film categories can never be precise. By isolating the various elements in a film and

⁶ Genre: "a style of category of art, music, or literature [or film]." (*Oxford Dictionary*)

categorizing them in genres, it is possible to easily evaluate a film within its genre and allow for meaningful comparisons and some judgments on greatness. Films were *not* really subjected to genre analysis by film historians until the 1970s. All films have at least one major genre, although there are a number of films that are considered crossbreeds or hybrids with three or four overlapping genre (or *sub-genre*) types that identify them. [Filmsite.org]

So for most Hollywood films, certain elements of a film might constitute its affiliation to a certain genre. When we considered previously *The Bourne Ultimatum*, we can easily affiliate it to the action genre by its plot (lots of violence and action) and its *syuzhet* (fast editing with close and tilting shots and a focus on special effects).

Yet, the website adds a twelfth category, which does not respond to any genre, or intermingles different genres, the *Auteur System*.

The *Auteur System* can be contrasted to the genre system, in which films are rated on the basis of the expression of one person, usually the director, because his/her indelible style, authoring vision or 'signature' dictates the personality, look, and feel of the film. Certain directors (and actors) are known for certain types of films, for example, Woody Allen and comedy, the Arthur Freed unit with musicals, Alfred Hitchcock for suspense and thrillers, John Ford and John Wayne with westerns, or Errol Flynn for classic swashbuckler adventure films. [Filmsite.org]

When we consider the aforementioned film *21 Grams*, its official genre (drama) is quite accurate since the atmosphere is dramatic, it involves character development and interaction between them, and it does not focus on special effects nor action. But the fragmented structure of the *syuzhet* renders the film more independent of a canonical Drama film which would be more linear in its narration.

The last part of this fifth dimension is the notion that we approached previously: the notion of “cult”. It is when an element of the film, whether on the content or the form, becomes sometimes even more famous than the film itself, and enters pop culture. Those “cult” elements can be considered that way, when for instance we notice the reference in another film, or see it parodied in a comedy. Therefore, the “cult” of a film is an aspect that can often be acknowledged only retrospectively. There have been many cases in which films that are considered nowadays as “cult” were a flop on their release (e.g. *Fight Club*).

This aspect of film in relation with other films, or their integration in pop culture makes us now consider the film as an object of the world, so something that is context-dependent, and as the expression of an *auteur* (the filmmaker) given to an interlocutor (the spectator). This is the topic of the sixth and last dimension of film.

2.2.6 Sixth dimension: film in context

This last dimension considers all the notions and elements that surround a film, in short, the context. The context of a film can be diegetic, so an expansion of the fictional universe, or extra-diegetic, so all the elements that are related to the film as an art piece, made by a director in the real-world.

When we talk about the *intra-diegetic* context, we talk about the expansion of the fictional universe in other films or other media. This phenomenon has been peculiarly developed in the last decades with what is known as franchise: “A general title or concept used for creating or marketing a series of products, typically films or television shows” (*Oxford Dictionary*).

The best Hollywood example that can be taken for example is the *Star Wars* franchise which was first a trilogy revolving around the characters of Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader. Then in 1999, George Lucas made a new trilogy, known as a “prequel”: “a story or film containing events which precedes those of an existing work” (*Oxford Dictionary*). In these terms, this is a trilogy in which the *fabula* sets before the “original” trilogy. Then, in the early 2010s, George Lucas sold his franchise to the Walt Disney Studios, who decided to revive it with a new trilogy. This new trilogy sets after the original trilogy, and we talk of a “sequel”: “a literary, cinematic, or televised work continuing the course of a story begun in a preceding one” (*Merriam-Webster*). The same universe can be extended in parallel to some events or characters

that are secondary to the main plot. In such a case we talk about a “spin-off” which can be made in the same media (e.g. *Star Wars Stories: Rogue One*), or it can be transmedia with TV Series (e.g. *Clone Wars*; *Rebels*), or even books and comics.

This extension of the diegetic universe becomes important for the film enthusiast who wants to fully understand a film, since there are usually many references to the other works or the franchise in general. For instance, the running gag in *Star Wars* is that in each episode, at least one character utters “I have a bad feeling about this”, if the spectator has not seen the other films, the gag cannot be understood.

The second aspect of the sixth dimension is the film as an object that takes into account the communicative pattern between the source of a film and the reception that follows:

Source (Production) → Message (Film) → Reception (Spectator)

While we considered all throughout this thesis the active status of the spectator as an addressee who cognitively processes the meaning of the film, we must consider the importance the source can have on the filmic comprehension.

The notion of production is the broad term that includes the two major types of films. On the one hand there is the collective production, which are the major film studios that are known for their main franchises (e.g. Walt Disney Pictures for *Star Wars* and *Marvel Universe*), in which the power of the filmmaker is subordinated to the studio’s agenda. On the other hand, there are the films that are considered as more independent, and whose main selling point will be the name of the filmmaker. This phenomenon is commonly found in conversations, when someone says for instance “Spielberg’s latest film was better than the ones that preceded” the utterance presupposes that both speakers know director Steven Spielberg, and perhaps his earlier works. This knowledge of who shot the film can have various consequences.

First, when a spectator likes one film by the filmmaker he could be interested in watching his other films, and so watch the other films by appreciation. When the spectator has seen some of his films, he might have noticed some recurring themes (i.e. fifth dimension) and so have a global idea of the director's style.

For instance, someone watches a film considered as "cult" like Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* [1994] and likes it. Then he watches the film that preceded, *Reservoir Dogs* [1992], and watches one of the latest films *Django Unchained* [2012]. The spectator will then notice some key features of a Tarantino film, such as "violence", "slang and rude language", "rich soundtrack", "fragmented narration" and "punchlines".

In addition to the recurring themes, the Tarantino enthusiast will notice that in one film there can be references to the filmmaker's other films, or the filmmaker himself as a cameo⁷; but for the latest, the spectator needs to know the face of the filmmaker. It can be under fictive brands such as "Big Kahuna burgers" or "Red Apple" cigarettes, the last name of some characters, or even some recurring actors like Samuel L. Jackson who played in five Tarantino films (out of eight films).

To sum up, this last dimension focuses on all the elements that revolve around the filmic content, whether it is diegetic, and so expands the fictional universe, or extra-diegetic and so focuses on the director's earlier works and style. The latter that has to be only focused on tangible elements, so the spectator can avoid any psychanalytic approach on the film.

This hexadimensional pattern to approach a film permits us then to uncover the main features that compose the filmic message. We will now consider with the corpus how a certain type of message can be constructed, and how this meaning can change in the form without

⁷ "A small theatrical role usually performed by a well-known actor and often limited to a single scene." (Merriam-Webster)

changing the main diegetic universe. But let us first consider the corpus which is a universe created in the early 90s by David Lynch and Mark Frost, the TV Series *Twin Peaks*.

2.3 Corpus: *Twin Peaks*

Before considering the *Twin Peaks* universe, I will start by explaining why I chose, partially, a TV series and not a film (despite the film between season two and three). I chose this series for its peculiarity of being a franchise in a certain way, but made by a couple of independent artists (David Lynch & Mark Frost), and developed on different media (series, film, books). To this, we can add the new status of films and series nowadays.

2.3.1 Context

Before the late 90s, TV series were commonly attributed to a certain genre and had to stick to it, notably action/detective series (e.g. *Columbo*, *Starsky & Hutch*), soap operas (*Dallas*, *The Bold and the Beautiful*) and sitcoms (e.g. *The Cosby Show*, *Seinfeld*). All of these series became popular, but not many of them reached the quality of a film, as on its reception as on its budget. At this time, *Twin Peaks* was like a UFO in the industry of series with a few others like the *Twilight Zone* or *The Prisoner*.

As an account of the industry of the series of the late 90s, we can quote an article from *Vanity Fair* about the times where David Chase was about to write the pilot of a series that would become one of the most acclaimed in the history of series: *The Sopranos*:

When it came to writing the show's pilot, Chase took Brad Grey at his word. He didn't want that stuff they did on the networks? Chase would give him something different. "I didn't really watch much television until the first season of *Twin Peaks*, in 1990," he explains. "That was an eye-opener for me. There's mystery in everything David Lynch does. I don't mean, who killed Laura Palmer? There's a whole other level of stuff going on, this sense of the mysterious, of the poetic, that you see in great painting, that you see in foreign films, that's way more than the sum of its parts. I didn't see that on television. I didn't see anybody even trying it. [...] Above all, he wanted the pilot to be cinematic: "I wanted to do the kind of stuff I've always loved to see. I didn't want it to be a TV show. I wanted to make a little movie every week." Indeed, Chase nervily inserted his David Lynch moment early in the pilot script: Standing behind his home, Tony is beguiled by some ducks that have landed in his swimming pool. It's not a scene that advances the plot; but what is clear is that, among other things, Chase was sending a message: We're not in Studio City anymore!" (Biskind, 2007)

Since *The Sopranos* and other works at that time, the TV series gained in artistic quality and recognition by its peers. The phenomenon started its growth in the 2000s and started reaching its peak in the following decade with series that were not only acclaimed by the critics (e.g. *Breaking Bad* and *Game of Thrones*) but so their budget became tremendous; as an example, the budget of the sixth season of *Game of Thrones* was \$100 million (*The Independent*).

We can note that in parallel, in the film industry, the development of franchises became the new motto of the major Hollywood studios, and so gave a new status to films, which are closer to a series in their *diegetic* length. Let us take for instance the *Marvel Universe*, which started in 2008 and counts nowadays (2018) nineteen features and twelve series; or the *Star Wars* universe which counts ten films and five others coming.

So besides their official denomination, our approach that can be made on films can be extended to TV series; the only difference is that one is longer and structured in episodes, while the other is shorter and made in one piece. Let us now consider briefly the main *fabula* of the *Twin Peaks* universe.

2.3.2 Main Plot

Twin Peaks is originally a series created by David Lynch and Mark Frost in 1990 and broadcasted on ABC. The series is presented as a mystery/drama genre and follows the investigation of FBI's Special Agent Dale Cooper into the murder of Laura Palmer, a homecoming queen whose corpse has been found, naked, wrapped in plastic, on the bank of a river. The story sets in the fictional eponymous city of Twin Peaks, Washington, a town known for its bucolic landscapes and its great coffees and cherry pies: the idealistic town of the Americana.

Yet, the appearance of such a tragedy breaks with this ideal town, and releases the evils that were concealed until then in Pandora's Box: drug traffic, insurance frauds, domestic violence, adultery, brothels, etc. So the spectator will follow Cooper's *whodunit* investigation with the Sheriff's office and some of the FBI's special agents, but will also discover the story of different characters who are not (or indirectly) connected to the murder of Laura Palmer. These drama parts focused on the intra- and inter-relations between the main families of Twin Peaks: the Palmers, the Hornes, the Haywards, the Briggs, the Hurleys, the Jennings and the Johnsons.

The first season focuses precisely on these two complementary genres. Yet, there are a few strange sequences that are not connected to the two genres, especially some dream sequences of the victim made by Dale Cooper, or some peculiar characters like the Log Lady, who carries a log like a child and talks to it. The first season ends with the arrest of the two major suspects, heads of the drug deals: Jacques Renault, who gets arrested, and Leo Johnson who gets shot. After this arrest, Cooper gets shot as well in his room by an unknown person.

This fantastic genre, which was minor in the first season, becomes major in the second season, which begins with a wounded Cooper who meets a supernatural character (The Giant). The Giant gives him enigmatic clues for the investigation before disappearing. At this point, the fantastic genre is added to the investigation, and changes the stakes. The one who killed Laura Palmer is actually a demonic entity (BOB) who took possession of a human being. This is revealed by another man possessed by an entity (MIKE) who used to collaborate with BOB in killing humans. At this point, what is at stake in this investigation is even greater than the simple principle of justice. It is a fight between good and evil.

Later on, the person who is possessed by BOB is actually Laura's own father, Leland Palmer. This is confirmed to Cooper by the Giant and they quickly arrest Leland. At this point the entity forces Leland to commit suicide before freeing the dying man, and then it disappears

into the woods in the form of an owl. So this resolution is only partial, as it appears quite early in the season (S02E07).

The new antagonist of this season is Windom Earle, Cooper's former FBI partner who escaped a mental institution and came to Twin Peaks to revenge. He quickly engages with Cooper in a game of chess where he murders someone whenever a piece is captured. Meanwhile, Cooper meets Major Garland Briggs who tells him about the existence of two extra-dimensional realms whose entrances are somewhere in the woods surrounding the town: The Black Lodge and the White Lodge. The new rivals Cooper and Earle are then looking for the same thing, the entrance of The Black Lodge, but with different intentions.

Windom Earle finds a way to finally avenge himself on Cooper and kidnaps a new arrival in town, Annie Blackburn, who Cooper falls in love with. Eventually, Cooper finds the Black Lodge in which Annie and Earle are.

The Black Lodge is, supposedly, the place with red curtains that Cooper was dreaming of. Looking for Annie and Earle, he meets doppelgängers of different characters, including one of Laura Palmer.

Earle wants Cooper's soul in exchange for Annie's life, which is accepted. But BOB comes over and takes Earl's life instead, before turning to Cooper, who is chased in the lodge by a doppelgänger of himself. At some point the spectator does not know who is who.

Later on, Cooper and Annie reappear in the woods, both injured. Annie is taken to the hospital and Copper recovers in his hotel room. On the last shot of the last episode, we can see Cooper looking in the mirror, whose reflection is actually BOB. And the season ends like this.

One year later, *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with me* is presented in Cannes Film Festival, which is a prequel to the series. The story is divided in two main parts. The first part sets one year before the case of Laura Palmer, in the town of Deer Meadow, Washington. The plot is about the

investigation of another FBI agent, Chester Desmond, on the mysterious murder of a teenage prostitute, Teresa Banks. This investigation leads Desmond to different places which eventually lead him to disappear, taken by an unseen force.

At the same time, in the FBI headquarters in Philadelphia, the Regional Bureau Chief Gordon Cole and Dale Cooper experience the vision of a former long lost colleague, Phillip Jeffries who gives them mysterious information before disappearing. Cooper is then sent to Deer Meadow to investigate the disappearance of Desmond, which is unsuccessful.

The second part starts one year later, in Twin Peaks, and follows the seven last days of Laura Palmer. In this part, the ambivalence that was suggested in the series is confirmed through the character of Laura Palmer. The latter keeps her persona of a nice homecoming queen during the day to hide her dark deeds: she is addicted to cocaine, she cheats on her boyfriend (Bobby) with another man (James), and her temper is completely bipolar. This latter aspect is mostly due to the several supernatural visions she has of the Black Lodge, of different characters that only appeared after her death (e.g. Annie and Cooper) and, of course, BOB who has been raping her since she was twelve.

Then, the final day comes, Laura become reckless, breaks up with the two boys, and goes to a cabin in the woods for an orgy with one of her classmates, Ronette, and the two suspects of the season 1 finale, Jacques Renault and Leo Johnson. Her father Leland, possessed by BOB, follows her, attacks Jacques and Leo and takes Laura and Ronette to an abandoned train car. Laura ends up stabbed to death while Ronette is left unconscious.

Twenty-six years later, a new season under the name of *Twin Peaks: The Return* is released on Showtime. This new season emancipates in many ways from the original plot,

especially with the multiplication of plots, the fragmentation of chronology, and the development of different dimensions that started with the Black Lodge.

The plot being complex, I will give a brief summary of the different plots without being exhaustive, due to its complexity.

1- The two Coopers

On the one side, there is the Cooper doppelgänger possessed by BOB, Mr C., who crosses the U.S. territory, in search of a mysterious symbol and kills everyone that steps in his path.

On the other side, there is the real Dale Cooper who is trapped in the Black Lodge and tries to find his way to leave it through many dimensions. He will end up in Las Vegas and take the place of another manufactured doppelgänger, Dougie Jones, totally disoriented.

The catatonic state of Cooper will impair his main goal through the series, which is destroying Mr C and saving Laura Palmer.

2- The FBI investigation

In Philadelphia, Gordon Cole, Albert Rosenfeld and Tamara Preston investigate a mysterious murder that happened in Buckhorn South Dakota, where a headless body has been found and seems to belong to Major Garland Briggs.

They are also told by a school headmaster, fascinated by parallel universes, that there is an alternative reality where he met Major Briggs.

3- Twin Peaks

Back to Twin Peaks, the inhabitants have continued their lives and went back to a certain stability. But the past resurfaces when Deputy Hawk is called by a dying Log Lady who tells him that something is missing and gives him clues that could explain Dale Cooper's

disappearance many years ago. Following the clues, Hawks finds some lost pages of Laura Palmer's secret diary which were mentioning about the dream Laura had of Annie which told that Cooper is still prisoner of the Black Lodge. At this point the former detectives that accompanied Cooper in his investigation start looking for new elements.

4- The other dimensions

This last part gathers all the different *diegetic* dimensions, notably the flashback sequences of the 1945 Trinity nuclear test in White Sands, New Mexico, where the first atomic bomb exploded. This sequence seems to indicate that this event has been the main cause of the appearance of the different demonic entities, in the world, through electricity.

These different narrations will crash together in the penultimate episode of the series, where a healed Cooper confronts Mr C. and finally destroys him, with the help of his former and new partners.

While episode 17 makes the spectator leave the series with what could be considered a happy ending, episode 18 adds new problems that will remain unsolved. The spectator is then left with many unresolved diegetic elements, and has to focus on cinematic data to build his own comprehension of the series.

From this brief summary, we can primarily conclude that the more developed the plot is, the more complicated it becomes to explain the story. Now we will see in the following part how this complexification of the *fabula* is extended to the *syuzhet*, which goes from quite a conventional *mise-en-scène* to a pure *auteur* formal system.

The analysis of *Twin Peaks* will be divided in three subparts, each one analysing some sequence extracts, and how they respond to the hexadimensional pattern.

Firstly, we will focus on extracts of the original series (season 1 and season 2) and consider how we come from a detective/drama to a fantastic/supernatural genre. Then, secondly, we will consider the change of format (series to film) with *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*, and how the film adds information to the plot. Then we will approach *Twin Peaks: The Return*, which already expresses its singularity by its name (“The Return” and not “Season 3”), and consider how this season makes a distance with diegetic information, in favour of the cinematic language.

3 CORPUS ANALYSIS

We primarily concluded that the language of cinema is dependent on the genre or the “auteur” it belongs to. Therefore, in the case of *Twin Peaks*, and especially the first two seasons, only the episodes directed by one of the two showrunners, David Lynch, will be taken into account to see the evolution of the *mise-en-scène*. It is usual in the production of series that the showrunner(s) direct(s) a few episodes, especially the pilot, but what remains is directed by several directors.

3.1 *Twin Peaks*, the original series

In our first part, which concerns the first two seasons, our analysis will focus on the Pilot, episode 8 (S02E01), 9 (S02E02), 14 (S02E07) and the finale (S02E22). The analysis of the pilot will be analysed in its major components, as the main filmic conventions of the series. Then we will see different sequences from the aforementioned episodes of season two, in order to see the different changes in these conventions, and to what purpose.

3.1.1 Opening credits

Before approaching the episodes, let us have first a view on something that is common to each: the opening credits. Opening credits are usually a montage sequence with one *extra-diegetic* music that connects the different shots of action, places and characters. The credits of cast and crew are usually like subtitles, and in the case of the cast, the name of the actor appears on an image of the character.

It is not the case with *Twin Peaks*, where there is no correspondence between the written credits and the shots onscreen. The opening credits of *Twin Peaks* (Figure 33) are like a big postcard of the rural town. It starts with a shot of a bird, which can symbolize nature, then shots

of the sawmill, as the town's main activity, then the town's panel and waterfalls that can be considered as the main natural attraction of the town. From these elements, we can underline that they do not seem to show elements that are especially connected to the detective, drama/soap opera openings or even fantastic genres. With the addition of the calm and relaxing score composed by Angelo Badalamenti, the presentation of *Twin Peaks* looks more like a promotional video for tourists. This opening sequence will be contradicted in the first sequence with the discovery of Laura's corpse, and so will give the tone of the detective story.



Figure 33: Opening credits of *Twin Peaks* [Lynch 1990-1991]

In order to have a better understanding of the pilot which, in a certain way, gives the conventions of the series, I will consider first the diegetic dimensions (first to fourth), starting with the fourth dimension which gives us the main structure of the film and a general idea of the universe.

3.1.2 Establishing the universe: deixis and conventions in season one

The pilot of *Twin Peaks* is peculiarly informative concerning the deixis. Even if the story starts *in medias res* the spectator quickly gets the *syuzhet* of the episode. Each sequence starts with a change in the *ego* or the *hic*. Concerning the *hic*, the setting is restricted to the town, and so the sequences will only be divided in different locations in the same town. To this we can add that most of the changes of sequence with *hic* are introduced by an exterior shot of the place, or a metonymic detail that is prototypical of the place (e.g. a log manufactured for the wood mill) to permit the spectator to re-create Twin Peaks and get acquainted with the atmosphere.

In each new location, the spectators discover the different characters and can observe their reaction about Laura's death which let presuppose their relationship with the departed.

Concerning the *nunc*, even if it is not directly expressed by different metonymic references (e.g. clocks), we can assume by the light effects that the whole episode takes only one diegetic day. We can add that this format of one day = one episode, will be maintained for the rest of the two seasons. In such terms, the *nunc* is then linear and has no long-duration ellipsis.

With this linear pattern, and the different pieces of information of *ego* and *nunc*, we can establish a chronological pattern (*Figure 34*) of the different locations and the characters that appear within in the format PLACE/Characters.

PACKARD HOUSE/Josie Packard, Catherine Martell, Pete Martell	TWIN PEAKS HIGH SCHOOL / Donna Hayward, Mike Nelson, James Hurley
TWIN PEAKS SHERIFF STATION/ Harry Truman, Major Briggs , Lucy Brennan	PACKARD SAWMILL
RIVER BANK/ Andy Brennan, Dr Hayward	HORNE HOUSE/ Sylvia Horne, Johnny Horne
PALMER HOUSE /Sarah Palmer	JOHNSON HOUSE/ Leo Johnson
GREAT NORTHERN HOTEL/ Audrey Horne, Ben Horne, Leland Palmer	BIG ED'S GAS FARM / Ed Hurley, Nadine Hurley
DOUBLE R DINNER/Bobby Briggs, Shelly Johnson, Norma Jennings	TWIN PEAKS CITY HALL/ Margaret Lanterman
HOSPITAL/ Agent Dale Cooper, Dr Jacoby	ROADHOUSE/ Julee Cruise (singer)

Figure 34: ego and hic in Twin Peaks S01E00 [Lynch 1990]

Now that we have considered how the episode's deixis is organised, we can focus on some sequences more precisely to have a broad idea of the *mise-en-scène*.

If we follow what has been said previously on relevance, the composition of the shot is quite conventional and follows the main principle of real life experience. When we focus on the general view of a place or an action, the distance will be long and emphasized with the depth of field, while the more emotional moments, and moments of dialogues will have closer shots with a shallow depth of field. We can see the difference between the moment Audrey disturbs the Norwegians' meeting, and the moment James and Donna confess their love to each other (*Figure 35*).



Figure 35: Twin Peaks Pilot [Lynch 1990]

Yet, concerning the second dimension there are some elements that can be considered. If we consider the movements, most of them are descriptive and are made with pan shots on the deictic shots, in order to see the environment in which it is set. There are some that are made to emphasize the dynamic made by the character's movement on the axes. For instance, when Cooper meets Truman, they both start walking in the corridor and the action is filmed with a dolly-out.

Even though, at the end of the episode, there is a subjective shot, made by camera hold, of someone walking in the woods with a torch. This shot emphasizes the presence of an unknown (or at least unseen) character who finds Laura's necklace. If we add it to the following shot of a hand that extracts the necklace, we want to know who it is. By the use of off-screen, and the alternate montage of Sarah Palmer being scared as well by an off-screen element, this last sequence creates the pilot's cliff-hanger.

This last sequence introduced us to the dimension of montage, in which there are some sequences that can be analysed. Of course most of the sequences are made by additive montage, on which the information is given and each shot presents the character who speaks. But there are two sequences on which the montage is more subtle: the sequences where the character that were very close to Laura are informed of her death.

First the telephone sequence between Sarah and Leland (*Figure 36*). The montage is alternate and shows the characters who speak. Even if they are not in the same place (*hic*), thanks to the linear *nunc*, we quickly figure out that their conversation is synchronic. In the *diegesis* we can see that Sarah is anxious, while Leland is more relaxed and pragmatic. Yet, when the third shot of Sheriff Truman is added to the montage, there is no need to hear the news from him. The simple action of Leland naming him makes sense in both character's minds, and makes them fall to pieces.



Figure 36: alternate montage in Twin Peaks Pilot [Lynch 1990]

In the classroom sequence (*Figure 37*), where Donna and James understand that Laura is dead, the montage is more conceptual and constructed by the gaze direction. The phenomenon starts with the teacher talking with the cops, an action which is interrupted by a girl screaming outside. The shot returns to Donna who looks at the teacher. These different elements already create a certain tension in the scene and is confirmed by the montage and the last clue : the empty chair. The action can be seen as follows:

- 1- Teacher talks with the cop
- 2- The teacher looks off-screen
- 3- Donna follows the gaze direction
- 4- Shot on the empty chair
- 5- Back on Donna who changes her gaze direction
- 6- The direction is toward James
- 7- Donna holds a scream
- 8- James is petrified
- 9- Donna cries
- 10- James turns his look at the teacher
- 11- The teacher speaks of an announcement
- 12- James breaks his pencil

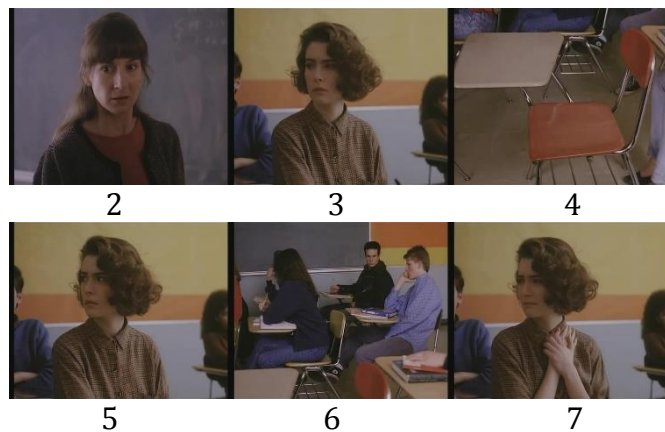


Figure 37: conceptual montage in Twin Peaks Pilot [Lynch 1990]

Even if the information “Laura is dead” is not directly given onscreen, it is induced by the conceptual montage which firstly gives a few elements that can be connected to something bad: the presence of the police and the girl screaming. Secondly, the montage gives three characters whose gaze direction eventually converges on an empty chair, Laura’s. At this point the message is transmitted to the two characters before the headmaster’s announcement.

From the elements given by the fourth dimensions, we can connect then this first episode to some themes that correspond to genres. We can firstly consider the definition of *filmsite.org* concerning detective-mystery films, one sub-type of the crime/gangster genre:

[They] focus on the unsolved crime (usually the murder or disappearance of one or more of the characters, or a theft) and on the central character –the hard-boiled detective hero— as he/she meets various adventures and challenges in the cold and methodical pursuit of the criminal or the solution to the crime. The plot often centers on the deductive ability, prowess, confidence, or diligence of the detective as he/she attempts to unravel the crime of situation by piecing together clues and circumstances, seeking evidence, interrogating witnesses, and tracking down a criminal. [*filmsite.org*]

Many aspects of this definition can be found in *Twin Peaks*’ pilot. Dale Cooper can be considered as the major detective, the crime is the murder of Laura Palmer, and some characters are interrogated (e.g. Bobby and Donna). There are even some clues scattered in the pilot that might bring information on the crime, such as Laura Palmer’s diary, the letter under the fingernail and the necklace.

The second genre to which *Twin Peaks* is related is Drama, and its sub-type, melodrama.

Dramas are serious, plot-driven presentations, portraying realistic characters, settings life situation, and stories involving intense character development and interaction. Usually, they are not focused on special-effect, comedy or action. Dramatic films are probably the largest film genre, with many subsets. [...]

[Melodramatic plots] usually emphasize sensational situation or crises of human emotion, failed romance or friendship, strained familial situations, tragedy illness, loss, neuroses, or emotional and physical hardships within everyday life. [*filmsite.org*]

This definition corresponds to all the parallel events of the plot that includes the secondary characters that are grieving the death of Laura (e.g. Sarah Palmer), but also all the events that are independent of the crime (e.g. the affair between Shelly and Bobby). This melodramatic part of the series reveals on the one hand the connection that some characters had with Laura, but also what is hidden behind the idealistic vision that we had of the town with the opening credits.

Before we consider the sixth dimension we can add that the pilot is also punctuated by some funny moments that permit the spectator to have a few moments of relief, and not to be drowned in an ocean of melodrama that would make the tone too close to a soap-opera.

Two main aspects of the sixth dimension can be highlighted in the pilot. I must mention though that those two elements could not have been noticed in the first screening of the series, so are considered retrospectively.

The first element is a diegetic expansion of the story. During the meeting in the city hall, Cooper talks about a similar case that happened about a year before in a town nearby, Deer Meadows: the murder of Theresa Banks. The spectator who watches the series and film a second time will notice that this murder case is the first part of the film *Fire Walk with Me* which sets one year before season one.

The second element are footages that David Lynch directed after *Fire Walk with me*, for the second airing of the series on the TV network Bravo. These short footages (between one and three minute long each) are introductions made by the mysterious character Margaret Lanterman (a.k.a The Log Lady). These introductions deal with philosophical questionings which the spectator might find related in the episode that follows. For instance, here is the introduction of the pilot.

Welcome to Twin Peaks. My name is Margaret Lanterman. I live in Twin Peaks. I am known as the log lady. There is a story behind that. There are many stories in Twin Peaks.

Some of them are sad, some funny. Some are stories of madness, of violence. Some are ordinary. Yet they all have about them a sense of mystery. The mystery of life, sometimes the mystery of death. The mystery of the woods, the woods surrounding Twin Peaks. To introduce this story let me just say it encompasses the all. It is beyond the fire. Though few would know that meaning. It is a story of many but it begins with one and I knew her. The one leading to the many is Laura Palmer. Laura is the one. [*Twin Peaks Pilot* 1992]

What can be underlined in these introductive footages is the ambiguity that the address from a *diegetic* character creates, since the introductive footages are usually presented by a member of the cast, the director or a critic. Of course, the address from a character to the spectator is an enunciative process that has been used many times, yet, there is some ambiguity made by the fact that there are no other addresses to the spectator in the episodes. Such an enunciative pattern that opens the notion of *discourse* can create several preliminary speculations on the special status of the Log Lady in *Twin Peaks*.

3.1.3 Extending the genre: the supernatural in season two

Let us now consider how the *fabula* and the *syuzhet* of the following episodes directed by David Lynch mark the change of genre of the series. Just to remind what concerns the main plot (the whodunit) of the series at the beginning of season two, we must remember that Cooper has been shot by an unseen person, that Leland Palmer killed Jacques Renault; and that a new character came in the story, Maddie Ferguson, Laura's cousin, performed by Sheryl Lee (the actress who also played Laura Palmer).

The analysis of season 2 will only point out the new elements that change the genre of the series, and the new diegetic elements, since the rest of the *mise-en-scène* is similar to the previous season. We will consider it mainly with the fifth dimension which connects the different occurrences between episode 8 (S02E01), 9 (S02E02) and 14 (S02E07) and then consider the particularity of the season finale (S02E22).

Beforehand, we can consider firstly a common element in all these episodes directed by David Lynch, including the pilot and the finale that can be considered as its signature in *Twin Peaks*: the musical scenes.

While the melodramatic scenes are emphasized by the extra-diegetic music, composed by Angelo Badalamenti, there is at least one moment in each episode directed by David Lynch in which music is intra-diegetic (*Figure 38*). The songs can be performed by artists that are independent of the plot, or by characters that are already known (e.g. James Hurley)



Figure 38: intra-diegetic singers in *Twin Peaks* Pilot, S02E01, S02E02, S02E07, and S02E22 [Lynch 1990-1991]

The main change that happens in season two is the appearance of the supernatural. Even if some sequences in season one were quite supernatural in their form and content, they were always connected to dream with the editing. For instance, the strange dream sequence of Cooper in the second episode (S01E02) where he sees Laura and the Man from Another Place (a.k.a MFAP) starts with a shot of Cooper sleeping, and ends with a shot of Cooper waking up. In season two, the limit between the real world and the supernatural is crossed with the appearance of the Giant to Cooper. What can be noticed from this supernatural sequence is that there is a change in the lighting (an additional light on the Giant) and a continuous high humming sound. The Giant gives enigmatic clues to Cooper that would be helpful to the investigation. Therefore we can presume that this humming sound is related to the supernatural appearances of entities. We will see now how this humming sound contributes to the supernatural atmosphere.

In each of the three episodes (8, 9 and 14) Maddie starts to have different visions of the demonic entity, BOB, which go from just pieces of him, to the real killer, Leland.

The first *diegetic* instability is at the moment Maddy and Sarah discover that Leland's hair turned white. Maddy says that she had a dream about the rug, before being interrupted by Leland. There is first an instability that appears at the same time Leland appears onscreen with a humming sound, this time very deep. The appearance of such a sound is connoted with danger, as it is used to express the void⁸, and brings a certain anxiety with the low frequency. This sound effect reappears when Sarah and Leland leave the place, and that we have an additive editing of Maddy's subjective shots and the reverse/shot on Maddy to see her reaction (*Figure 39*). We can see this causal relationship by the evolution of the rug starting to be entirely stained and revealing some parts of BOB. In this scene, the distance of the shots on Maddy gets closer, and the humming sound gets louder.



Figure 39 : Supernatural in Twin Peaks S02E01 [Lynch 1991]

This can hardly be considered as a dream, or a hallucination since the face of BOB appeared to other characters. Another vision comes in the next episode (*Figure 40*), where Maddy sings with Donna and James. Donna leaves the room, followed by James to have a little melodramatic scene of the jealous lovers. In the meantime, Maddy waits in the living room, looking in front of her. We already note that the shot is made with short focal lenses, which creates a deep depth of field. Then the deep humming sound comes again, and BOB appears in the background and starts moving on the Z-axis to the camera. While BOB moves from a long

⁸ Because expressing the void with absence of sound is too unnatural for the spectator.

shot, to an extreme close-up, the reverse shot of Maddie is the same in distance and angle, to make the spectator focus on her facial expression, and maintain her in the same position. So when BOB is the closest to the camera, the movement that Maddie does backwards while screaming seems natural.



Figure 40: supernatural in Twin Peaks S02E02 [Lynch 1991]

In the third episode, the supernatural visions of Dale and Maddie collide in a fade-out between two different *hic*: the house of the Palmers and the roadhouse. Dale is informed of another tragic event occurring, while Maddie is about to be attacked by BOB.

Charrière says that the fade-out is: “un principe de montage qui repose sur la disparition d’une image et l’apparition d’une autre. C’est une figure de la métamorphose qui indique une modification des données concernant une temporalité, un espace, ou des individus.” [Charrière 2013: 9] In such terms, the change of data is about the *hic*, while the *nunc* is maintained, mostly by the Giant’s line that preceded: “it is happening again”.

We can note that in the preceding sequence at the Palmers the deep humming appeared, without any vision of BOB, while at the roadhouse, the Giant appears again with the special lights and the high humming. While the shot of the Giant fades to the shot of the record player, the high sound also fades to the deep sound.

The sequence that follows finally reveals who is the “host” of BOB with a shot on Leland looking at his reflection on the mirror, which turns into BOB (Figure 41). At this point, the spectator is then aware of who actually killed Laura. This revelation is also given to Maddie who goes to see Leland and sees BOB instead. This killing sequence is peculiarly interesting in its *mise-en-scène* since many elements of the *diegesis* are shown without being directly mentioned. Firstly the notion of double is also shown with the overlaps of BOB and Leland in the role of the

assassin but also the victim is the same actress (Sheryl Lee), which metaphorically doubles the murder of Laura by BOB, and makes the Giant's line even more relevant.



Figure 41: The revelation of BOB with montage and superimposition in *Twin Peaks* S02E07 [Lynch 1991]

We can also note that when it is BOB onscreen, the action is in slow motion which increases the dramatic impact and gives the spectator some additional time to think about the content [Charrière 2013: 16]. And indeed, in this time we can pay more attention to the elements that we attributed to the Giant, which are present in this scene (the high humming and the additional light). Due to the number of occurrences, and the duration, we can suppose that these elements are the metonymy of the Giant who sees the whole murder. This is eventually confirmed with the editing that shows firstly a shot of Maddy dead, then secondly a shot of the Giant with no transition effect (e.g. fade-out) who seems to look at the dead girl. This clear-cut creates the ambiguity, and suggests the omniscience of the Giant.

With this sequence, the spectator is informed of many things. On the diegetic dimensions (first to fourth) the *syuzhet* proved who the real murderer is and what seemed to be visions are actually real. On the more distant dimensions, we can see that the transitions between the sequences and *diegetic* realities are more ambiguous onscreen, and that sound has a particular function in *Twin Peaks*. This latter case can be confirmed by the sixth dimension, where most of the sound designs in David Lynch's films (e.g. *The Elephant Man*, *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*, *Lost Highway*...) are actually made by the director himself (*Internet movie database*). We can also notice the irony of this fact by the character David Lynch impersonates in *Twin Peaks*, Gordon Cole, who is hearing impaired.

In the middle of season two the one who killed Laura Palmer is revealed and arrested (S02E08). This turn in the main plot, mainly due to the channel's request, led the two creators of the series to continue the story with the main interrogation answered. Thanks to the change of genre, the supernatural permitted to extend the *fabula* to something that goes beyond the limits of the investigation. In the series finale, Cooper finally enters what was supposed to be just dreams, the Black Lodge (a.k.a the Red Room). This final sequence is extremely complex in its *mise-en-scène* but there are some new elements that we must add, before exploring the film *Fire Walk with Me*.

These elements are made in order to mark the appearance of a new diegetic dimension in the *Twin Peaks* universe without any explanatory dialogues. The two main elements of *mise-en-scène* are sound, movements and editing.

David Lynch made a particular work on sound and especially dialogues by shooting the actors acting and talking backwards (e.g. the utterance "let's rock" [lɛts rɒk] is recorded [kɒr stɛl]). Then, he reversed what was filmed, which creates a language that is similar in its construction and phonation, but different in its global result that emphasizes the sensation of strangeness. Sometimes the result of such a process is not easy to understand by the listener, therefore, David Lynch added subtitles to give a better comprehension of the dialogues to the spectator (i.e. explanatory titles).

The second element of *mise-en-scène* is made on the shot contents, in which the movements were recorded the same way the dialogues were. What makes this sequence even weirder is that only Cooper does not have this special effect on movement and voice, which emphasized the fact that he is still not an entity yet.

The last element that contributes to this strange sequence is the editing, which changes the *diegetic* content shot by shot. For instance, when Cooper finally finds Annie, we have a shot

on Annie, then on Cooper, but when we return on the former angle, it is not the same character (Caroline). This is repeated many times to create empathy between the spectator and Cooper who is being more and more confused. To this part we can also keep in mind the two main constituents of the setting of the Lodge that would be recurrent in the universe, the black and white floor and the red curtains.

The season finale ends with a shot that is similar to the shot on Leland we saw previously which reveals that the Cooper who left the Lodge is his doppelgänger, possessed by BOB. Once again, the new challenge that came in the middle of the season (saving Annie and getting rid of Windom Earl) has been solved but opened a new issue that would not be solved for twenty-five years.

Meanwhile, *Fire Walk with Me* was released in 1992, and did not gave any answer to the series finale, since the story sets before the pilot's *diegesis*, but left some clues though.

3.2 *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with me*

We will consider *Fire Walk with Me* (FWWM) the same way it is structured, therefore in two parts. But before that, let us have a look on the opening credits as we did for the original series.

3.2.1 Opening credits

We will consider *Fire Walk with Me* (FWWM) the same way it is structured, therefore in two parts. But before that, let us have a look at the opening credits (*Figure 42*) as we did for the original series.

The credits open with a soberer style, a blue screen moving while the names of the cast appear onscreen. Yet, when the credits come to their end (usually when the name of the director appears), there is a dolly-out, which reveals that the moving blue color was actually the white noise (a.k.a snow) of a TV set. This movement backward of the camera can be seen as the distance taken by the *Twin Peaks* universe from the only TV format, the TV set as the metonymy of the medium. This can be related to the “exposed apparatus” that Metz developed in *Impersonal Enunciation* [Metz 1991], in other terms, the expansion of the universe in another medium. In this case, it is cinema. The last shot of these credits confirms this distance with the TV set being destroyed. The sequence ends with off-screen movements, and off-frame screaming and beating sounds that suggest a murder. This is confirmed in the following sequence that shows a body wrapped in plastic, floating down the river, and named by the subtitle “Teresa Banks”. So these opening credits suggest a distance from what we have been accustomed to, which seems familiar in its ending though.



Figure 42: opening credits of *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* [Lynch 1992]

3.2.2 Expanding the universe in part one: Theresa Banks

This change of structure is already visible in the first thirty minutes, in which many aspects of the deixis (fourth dimension) of the original series have changed. Contrary to the two preceding seasons, the deixis of *Twin Peaks* is extended in *ego*, *hic* and *nunc*, so in other terms, the diegetic universe is extended. Let us have a first look at these changes.

For the spectator, the *nunc* is different since it sets before the original series' timeline (one year before) without being marked onscreen until the second part starts with the title "one year later" and opens with a shot on Laura Palmer, so the time where she was still alive.

Then the *hic* is perhaps one of the most explicit changes in the series deixis where the setting is also extended to other places than the eponymous town (Figure 43), sometimes without a real development of the action in it. In less than five minutes, there are already two different places on which we will not return in the rest of the film (Oregon, South Dakota) before discovering one of Twin Peaks nearby towns, Deer Meadow, WA. The first part ends with the addition of two other places, Philadelphia, and another unnamed supernatural place that is not the Black Lodge: the convenience store.



Figure 43: multiplication of *hic* in *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (Lynch 1992)

Eventually, even if the crime is similar Laura Palmer's and connected (mentioned in the pilot) the *ego* has changed. The victim (Teresa Banks) and the investigator (Chet Desmond) are characters that the spectator has not seen before.

If we connect these changes to the opening sequence, we can see that the distance taken by the camera from the TV set actually implies the distance we take from the *Twin Peaks* universe, which was reduced to a linear chronology, one single setting (Twin Peaks, WA) and Dale Cooper.

This distance taken from the original series can be seen also in the *diegesis* with the passage in Deer Meadow as the antithesis of Twin Peaks (fifth dimension). If we have a look at many shots of the scenes in Deer meadow, we can see the similarity with Twin Peaks (characters, places), but without the idealistic aspect of a quiet and naïve rural town of the Americana. If we compare some shots of the pilot with *Fire Walk with Me* (Figure 44) we can see this connotation, notably in the morgue sequence. While in the pilot, Laura Palmer's body is mostly off-screen, and is just focused on the details in the film, Teresa Bank's body is shown more crudely.



Figure 44: comparison between *Twin Peaks Pilot* [Lynch 1990] and *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* [Lynch 1992]

From these shots above, we can see from their constructions the different connotation there is (first dimension), and especially the angle of the two long shots of the diner.

On the one hand there is the RR diner with a face-camera Norma, with which the low angle gives a vanishing point in the direction of “UP” and connotes the RR diner as the typical American diner of the 50s. On the other hand, there is a high angle shot on the Hap’s diner in which the vanishing point goes “DOWN” to a dark backdoor with a malfunctioning lamp in it. This connotative presentation of the diner emphasizes the emptiness of a rural diner.

Therefore, we can argue that *Deer Meadows* is like *Twin Peaks*, but without the melodramatic connotation the latter has, and so is mostly related to the detective and supernatural genre.





3.2.3 Supernatural in the *syuzhet*: Philip Jeffries

Before we analyse the second part of the film (the seven last days of Laura Palmer) let us have a quick view at the sequence of the FBI headquarters, where the long-lost Phillip Jeffries meets Cooper and Cole. In this sequence, we can see the difference of transition there is between two different places made with a fade-out of the FBI sequence to the room above the convenience store. Even if we saw that some effects of transition like the fade-out in the original series expresses the metamorphosis and a change of data, we can also note that on the fading shots, there is a third shot of the snow we saw previously.

If we consider firstly the definition of snow (a.k.a “white noise”): “Noise [or signal] containing many frequencies with equal intensities” (*Oxford Dictionary*) we can relate it to these two sequences as being two overlapping frequencies due to Phillip Jeffries. Even if this supposition seems far-fetched on a first view, if we have a look on the diegetic elements that precede and the ones that follows, we can presume that the broad notion of electricity is important in the story.

Before the transition, Cooper looks at a video surveillance camera, and then looks at the screen of this same camera, but when Jeffries enters the corridor, Cooper sees his own frozen

picture onscreen while Jeffries passes by. During the whole sequence in the convenience store, which show all the demonic entities, we can see that the sequence is punctuated by more or less white noise superimposed, and we can hear that the conversation between Jeffries and the other FBI agents is still present off-frame. To this sequence passage we can add the extreme close up on a mouth facing the camera that pronounces “electricity”. This sequence ends with the intermingling of the appearance of the Red Room, the white noise, Jeffries screaming, and shots of him in FBI headquarters interrupted by shots of snow and electric fields. This additive montage finally ends with the empty chair where Jeffries was. In order to make this sequence a bit clearer, I made a chronological pattern (*Figure 45*) of the sequence that starts when Jeffries points his finger at Cooper and ends when Jeffries has disappeared.

		1	2	3	4	5
Shot						
Deixis	Hic	FBI Office	Convenience store /Room	Convenience store /Room	Convenience store /Room	Room fades to Lodge
	Ego	Jeffries, Cooper, Albert	MFAP	Jumping Man	BOB, MFAP, Jumping Man	BOB + MFAP
Superimpositions		White Noise (Snow) Jumping Man	White noise (snow)	White noise (snow)	White noise (snow)	Philip Jeffries screaming + White Noise (snow)
Dialogues 1 (FBI)		Jeffries: <i>Who do you think this is there?</i>	Jeffries: <i>The ring... The ring. [...] It was above a convenience store</i>	∅	Jeffries : <i>I've been to one of their meetings</i>	Jeffries [screaming]
Dialogues 2 (Room)		∅	MFAP: <i>With this ring, I thee wed</i> (laughs)	Jumping Man: <i>Electricity!</i>	∅	∅
Other sounds		White noise Deep humming Reversed sounds	White noise (low)		White noise (low) Reversed sounds	White noise (low)
Time Code		00:29:00	00:29:55	00:30:07	00:30:15	00:30:42

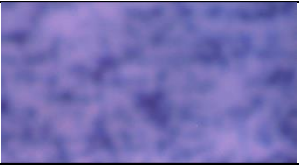




N°		6	7	8	9	10
Shot						
Deixis	Hic	∅	FBI Office	∅	FBI Office	
	Ego	∅	Cooper, Jeffries, Albert	Electric pole	Jeffries' empty chair	Albert, Cooper
Superimpositions		∅	White noise (snow)			∅
Dialogue 1(FBI)		Jeffries [screaming]	Gordon Cole: <i>He's gone he's gone! Albert call the front desk!</i>			Albert: <i>I got the front desk now he was never here!</i>
Dialogue 2(Room)		∅				
Other sounds		White noise (loud)	Intermittent white noise + reversed sounds			
Time Code		00:30:46	00:30: 47	00:30:49	00:30:50	00:30:52

Figure 45: supernatural genre in the structure of montage in Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me [Lynch 1992]

3.2.4 Uncovering the unknown in part two: Laura Palmer

Since this part sets chronologically before the murder of Laura, it focuses on the life of this character who was at the centre of the *fabula* without being present. In other terms, there is a new *ego* (Laura), in an uncovering *nunc* (what actually happened), but in the same setting (Twin Peaks, WA). The *syuzhet* of the film presents the life of this teenage girl divided between her surface life in which we see her complicated relationship with others, and the deep suffering and solitude she hides. Most of the supernatural scenes in which she has visions of the different entities are close in their filmic structures to what we previously saw with the character of Maddie; so there will be no need to have a view on it.

Yet, there are some elements in the dramatic part (without explicit supernatural), which emphasize something that the spectator already knows, the irreversible solitude and evanescence of the character. This evanescence is already shown in different filmic ways before the climactic scene of Laura being killed. It can be seen firstly on several single shots of Laura, on which her isolation is made on the different axes of the shot. The duration of these shots is sufficiently long to be integrated by the spectator (more than 3 seconds).

There is a discussion between Laura and her best friend Donna, in which the former expresses her will to keep the latter away from her. This is a way for Laura to prevent Donna from falling with her in a perverted life. Without paying attention to the dialogues, we can see the distance between the two characters on the Z-axis, made with a deep depth of field that emphasized this moral distance between both girls. At the moment Laura gets rid of Donna she goes to the roadhouse (a.k.a Bang Bang Bar), and accidentally crosses the Log Lady who warns her, with her enigmatic style, of the dangers of losing innocence and goodness. When the Log Lady leaves, Laura looks at her reflection and sees what she has become. This reflexive shot is followed by Laura entering the roadhouse in which there is an intra-diegetic song played and

whose chorus is “Why did you go? Why did you turn away from me?” At this moment, the medium-long shot of Laura entering the roadhouse emphasizes the isolation of the character. It emphasizes it with the void that surrounds her on the X-axis and also the frame-within-the frame made by the bar’s threshold. Then the dolly-in reframes the shot (close-up) on Laura’s face in order to focus on the emotion of the character who listens to the reflexive song.

The addition of these three shots on Laura (*Figure 46*) makes us understand the complexity of the character, notably the difference of how her loneliness is shown before and after the reflexive shot. The one that precedes shows the surface of a cold “femme fatale”, while the one that follows shows a girl who suffers of her fall.



Surface loneliness



Reflexivity



Real loneliness

Figure 46: evolution of the character's state of mind with shot composition in Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me [Lynch 1992]

This sequence reveals the real emotional state of the broken character and introduces her disappearance that will be confirmed later in the film, especially on her last day. We can see the process of disappearance of the character in the classroom sequence (*Figure 47*) where Laura finally knows who was actually raping her since she was twelve and is already disconnected to the world she used to know.

This evanescence of the character starts with shots on Laura who is isolated from the space (with a shallow depth of field), and two subjective shots that reveal her psychological instability. The first shots are superimposition of the classroom clock that expresses the loss of the notion of time. The second shot expresses the inner suffering of the character with the use of an oblique angle [Charrière 2013:5]. Finally, there is the shot of Laura, crying, who leaves her chair, which fade-out to a shot of the empty chair.

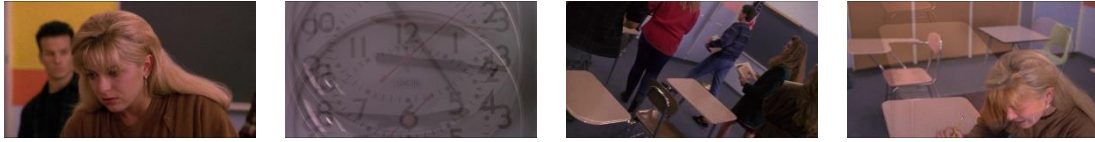


Figure 47: subjective instability in *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* [Lynch 1992]

Therefore, while the different shots of this sequence are made to create a certain empathy toward Laura by showing her subjectivity. The last shot (*Figure 48*) evokes a similar shot of the original series (pilot) that we saw previously: the moment where Donna and James understand that Laura is dead.



Figure 48: similar shots in *Twin Peaks S01E00* (left) [Lynch 1990] and *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (right) [Lynch 1992]

The preliminary conclusion that can be argued is that, against all odds, *Fire Walk with Me* does not give a sequel to the cliff-hanger that the original series left to the spectator (Cooper in the Lodge). On the one hand, the film expands the supernatural genre in space and time, which was explicitly introduced in season two, with a similar diegetic event (the Teresa Banks case) and in the *mise-en-scène* with the sequence of Philip Jeffries that mixes with montage the real world and the supernatural world without any diegetic distinction between both (e.g. the entrance of the Black Lodge), besides the implicit metonymies of electricity that connect them.

On the other hand, the second part of the film is an explicit presentation of what actually happened to Laura Palmer. In this part, the spectator uncovers elements that were just mentioned in the original series such as objects (the secret diary, the cocaine addiction), the relationships that Laura had with recurrent characters and the distance she gradually kept from

them, and the fact that before being killed, the young woman suffered from this double life she had.

3.3 *Twin Peaks: The Return*

For about twenty five years, the Twin Peaks universe was seen as completed, and left the spectator to his own speculation on the final explanation of the story. This hope of finding a sequel started to vanish even for the David Lynch enthusiast who knew that Lynch had not directed any film since *Inland Empire* [2006] which was a final critique from the artist of Hollywood. Yet, in 2014, Lynch and Frost announced the production of *Twin Peaks: The Return*, whose subtitle was explicit enough for the spectator that it would not be another prequel.

3.3.1 Waiting for *The Return*: the written works

Before we start to approach the series' revival, we can mention that the *diegetic* universe of Twin Peaks has been expanded during these twenty-years, especially in literature. While David Lynch was the showrunner who focused on the filmic direction, the *syuzhet*, the second showrunner, Mark Frost, was the main person in charge of the screenplay and story, so the *fabula*. After the first season, Frost tasked two writers with the writing of two novels made from *diegetic* props of the series, about the two main characters: Laura and Cooper. This ended up with *The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer* [1990], written by Jennifer Lynch (Lynch's daughter), which follows the life of Laura since she was twelve; and *The Autobiography of FBI Special Agent Dale Cooper: My Life, My Tapes* [1991], written by Scott Frost (Frost's brother).

Even if literature has no interest for this thesis, this makes us consider that the chronology of *Twin Peaks* had been extended and can give retrospectively some information about the universe that would not be mentioned in the series. And yet, they keep a *diegetic* format by being a diary or audiotapes and permit the enthusiast to have the impression of having an omniscient power, being in the character's intimacy.

In 2016, while *The Return* was announced, Mark Frost published a new book called *The Secret History of Twin Peaks*, which deals with all the supernatural phenomena that happened in the north-western town, beginning with the journals of Lewis and Clark. This time, the book is presented as a *diegetic* FBI dossier about the city that has been given to an agent of the Bureau by Gordon Cole. This agent who annotates the dossier is actually a character of the third season, agent Tamara Preston (Chrysta Bell).

All these metatextual, but canonical expansions published, and the new season coming make us reconsider the status of the *Twin Peaks* universe, whose *nunc* was mostly closed in the early 1990s.

This extension of the *nunc* also introduces the expansion of the other elements of deixis in the new season that will be more complicated to what the spectator was used to see. The approach on *Twin Peaks: The Return* will focus mostly on the pilot and compare it to what has been made before, and then I will introduce a few elements of the whole season that constitute its aesthetics.

3.3.2 Twenty-five years later: the opening sequence

The pilot of *The Return* starts directly with an extract (*Figure 49*) of the final episode of the series (S02E22), where we see Cooper sitting next to Laura in the Black Lodge. In this extract we are reminded that Laura said to Cooper “I’ll see you again in twenty-five years”, approximately the same period of time between season two [1991] and the series revival [2017]. Therefore this extract gives a second enunciative status to this utterance.

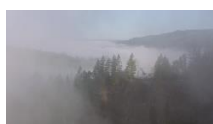
There is the diegetic enunciation of Laura as the enunciator and Cooper as the co-enunciator, and there is the extra-diegetic enunciation (sixth dimension) of the series's creators (Lynch and Frost) as enunciators to the spectator as the co-enunciator.



Figure 49: Twin Peaks: The Return S03E01 [Lynch 2017]

After this short, yet relevant, introduction the opening credits of the series start. What can be seen is the obvious overlap of shots of different times and places which emphasize that even if it is a return to the series, many things have changed.

The opening credits (*Figure 50*) start with a bird view shot on the forest that surrounds Twin Peaks, which gives a more demiurgic status to the spectator, contrary to the original series whose opening credits were closer to human feasibility. Then the shot fades-out to a shot of the iconic wood mill of the original credits, but this time the wood mill is disused and so depicts the ravages of time that the town suffered in the meantime. Then the shot fades-out on the corridor of the school, empty, and the shot of the original series's pilot of the screaming girl who learnt the death of Laura Palmer. The overlap of shots of present and past times suggests that the period of time that happened in-between was like an long gap in which things have changed, but the main plot has not; as the dolly-in on Laura's iconic portrait shows, with the title of the series that appears onscreen with the musical theme of Angelo Badalamenti.



Demiurgic shot



Present



Present/Past



Past



Past and present

Figure 50: opening credits of Twin Peaks: The Return [Lynch 2017]

We can finally note that the opening credits end with another demiurgic shot of the Snoqualmie waterfalls which fades-out to a shot of the two main settings of the Black Lodge (“electric” floor and red curtains). This final shot suggests then that this time (twenty-five years

later) the supernatural will be deliberately an integral part of this season. This is confirmed in the following sequence, whose particularity is the black and white filter on the frame (second dimension), which has not been used in the *mise-en-scène* of the preceding opuses.

3.3.3 Back to *Twin Peaks*: the pilot

Like the analysis that we did on the first part, we will consider first the diegetic similarities and changes there are in the pilot as it has been aired for the first time (episode one and two) as a single episode. Then we will see the sixth dimension on a broader level, with the different references to the previous works of Lynch and Frost. As we did before with season one, we will have a look first at the deixis of both pilots (*ego*, *hic*, *nunc*), which seems obviously more complex than it used to be (in bold characters and places that were already present in the original series and the film).

FLASHBACK S2E22/ Cooper (1990), Laura (1990)	UNKNOWN DINER/ Mr C.
OPENING CREDITS	TP/GLASTONBURY GROVE/ Hawk
TP/ FOREST/ Dr Jacoby	BLACK LODGE/ Cooper, MIKE, Laura Palmer
NEW YORK/ Sam, Tracey	FLASHBACK : S2E22 / Cooper (1990) , Mr C. (1990), BOB
TP/GREAT NORTHERN/ Ben and Jerry Horne	
TP/ SHERIFF STATION / Lucy Brennan	UNKNOWN GARAGE/ Mr C.
UNKNOWN CABIN/ Mr C. , Otis, Darya, Ray	UNKNOWN MOTEL/ Mr C. , Darya, Chantal, Hutch
NEW YORK/ Sam, Tracey	BLACK LODGE/ MFAP, MIKE, Cooper,
BUCKHORN/ Margaery Green, Det. Macklay	NEW YORK/ Cooper
TP/ SHERIFF STATION / Hawk Hill, Log Lady	VORTEX/ Cooper
BUCKHORN/William Hastings	TP/PALMER HOUSE/ Sarah Palmer
LAS VEGAS/ Mr Todd	ROADHOUSE/ James Hurley, Shelly Johnson

Figure 51: New *ego* and *hic* in *Twin Peaks: The Return* S03E01 [Lynch 2017]

What we can already see from this chart (Figure 51) is the similarity in terms of multiplication of *ego* and *hic* in the new series, as there has been some in the first part of *Fire Walk with Me*. Yet, this time, the different settings are more developed in terms of action within,

and they are introduced by a long-shot of the place with their name in the subtitles. So perhaps this time, the action in periphery of *Twin Peaks* might not be just single sequences. For the places that are unknown to the spectator, and not labelled, the main marker will be the *ego*, notably for the different scenes with Mr C.



New York City, NY Twin Peaks, WA Buckhorn, SD Las Vegas, NE

Figure 52: multiplication of hic in *Twin Peaks: The Return* S03E01 [Lynch 2017]

Like the *hic*, there are many old and new characters in this pilot, and the particularity of this season is that they are not interconnected through one single event (e.g. Laura Palmer/Teresa Banks) but have their own story which might be connected in the following episodes.

While the deictic structure of this season seems complex at the first viewing, we can see that in parallel, the *mise-en-scène* of the first and second dimension are not. As in season one's pilot, most of the movements and shot constructions follow the main filmic conventions for the sequences in the "real" world.

Perhaps, these "conventional" sequences are made for the sake of clarity to the spectator and so permit him to focus on the content rather than the *syuzhet*, but perhaps, those are also made as a contrast to the supernatural sequences, which we will talk about now and that are not conventional.

When Cooper is trying to escape the Black Lodge, there are some different elements of *mise-en-scène* which create a disruption of the supernatural universe that could have been thought as linear in time, and positioned in space in the surroundings of Twin Peaks.

Firstly, when Cooper wanders in the Black Lodge, he draws one of the red curtains that reveals his doppelgänger in his car, but in a setting that does not look like the north-western

countryside (it is actually South Dakota). Therefore, there is (and will be in the following episodes) a disruption of space in this season that will not be just in the dream sequences (e.g. Laura's dream in *Fire Walk with Me*). Now, there are some supernatural shortcuts.

Secondly, we can talk about two sequences that cross each other at one particular moment (*Figure 53*), but both are one another's off-screen and do not happen at the same moment on the episode's timeline. This cross over is between the discussion of Sam and Tracy in New York City's "glass box experiment" and the escape of Cooper from the Black Lodge with a vortex that throws him in the box. While Sam talks with Tracey in the hall, Cooper actually appears in the box. There is a small number of identical shots that are here to reveal the synchronicity of the event. Due to their different place in timeline, we can argue that time is no longer entirely reliable as it used to be: one episode = one day.

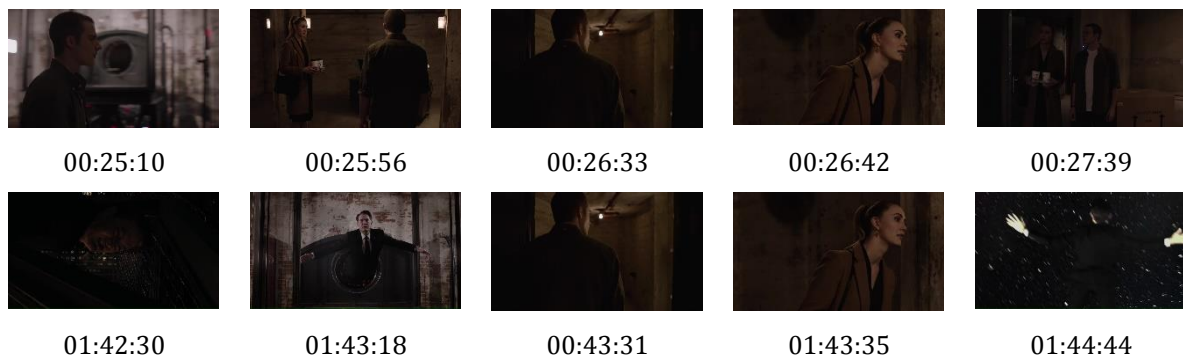


Figure 53: Two sequences crossing over in the same event at a different time in *Twin Peaks: The Return* S03E01 [Lynch 2017]

This same way of repeating the same number of shots is even more disconcerting when there is no division of the point of view, as there is in one of the Black Lodge sequences where Cooper talks to MIKE (*Figure 54*). This shot is shown twice in the same episode, with just a few minutes in-between (01:12:36 and 01:19:36). To this disconcerting sensation that the repetition of shots



Figure 54: repeated shot in *Twin Peaks: The Return* pilot and S03E18 [Lynch 2017]

gives, we can add the diegetic line from MIKE who says “is it future or is it past” and gives the sequence a metatextual connotation: time in the supernatural world is not reliable, or at least, not linear. If we extend the analysis of this shot, we can add that it is also present in the season’s finale so even at the end of the season itself (00:04:35). So even if the *mise-en-scène* seems more conventional to the one Lynch did in *Fire Walk with Me*, their narrative structure is not conventional as it used to be.

Let us now see in the whole season some of the recurring themes, and what kind of connotation they can convey.

3.3.4 Electricity, childhood and David Lynch: the recurring themes

We can say, firstly and briefly, that in each episode, the signature of David Lynch as a director is still present. As we saw previously in the original series and the film, there is at least one *diegetic* song per episode, which usually sets in the roadhouse and introduces the ending titles. Some of them are also, in a certain way, a quick reminder of the past, with the same performer (e.g. Julee Cruise in S03E17, *FWM*, S01E01 and S02E07).

The second theme is connected to this notion of time passing: childhood. While the presence of children in what preceded was rare or even non-existent (in *FWM*), there are many sequences in all throughout the series that depict one or several children. What can be highlighted in this bigger presence of children is how they are depicted. While these sequences are in parallel of the main plot and have no incidence on it, some random events of the main plot can have consequences on them, usually quite tragic: the children are all subjected to an event that can cause a trauma (*Figure 55*). For instance, the course of events makes the character Richard drive a truck under the influence of drugs and pass over a line of cars waiting

at the traffic lights. But at the moment he passes over the car, a boy crosses the road, and gets run over.



Figure 55: representation of childhood in *Twin Peaks: The Return* [Lynch 2017]

Even if I want to avoid any ideological views on *Twin Peaks*, the number of occurrences of the same subject makes it unavoidable. Childhood is the period of dreams, illusions, innocence, and the child of this series faces the loss of all of them. Some of them see an injured woman, one lives with a drug-addict mother, another gets hit by a car, etc. And so the spectator is. The spectator has lost the innocence and ideal view that *Twin Peaks* used to depict. The Americana-melodramatic genre of the original series has been replaced by the sad realism of rural America; as the character Janey-E says in episode 6 “we are the 99 percenters [...] we live in a dark, dark age” (00:46:40-00:47:30). We can see this dramatic change of times with the sequence we mentioned above (crossroad) in which the event of a car passing-over while cars are stopped is similar to another scene in *Fire Walk with Me*, and the crossroads is the same.



Figure 56: same place (hic) at a different time (nunc).

Left: *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* [Lynch 1992] Right: *Twin Peaks the Return* S03E06 [Lynch 2017]

The period of *The Return* is also a period where the children are more exposed to the different factors that can make them lose their innocence too prematurely, especially with electronic devices that are everywhere nowadays, with the internet and mobile phones.

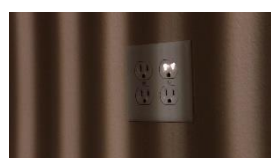
This latter case introduces the last main theme of this season: electricity. If we follow the hypothesis that we rose about *Fire Walk with me*, electricity is what connects the supernatural and the natural, and especially the bad entities of the supernatural. While electricity was only suggested with lights and montage and a few metonymic elements, now electricity is everywhere and omnipresent. It is present on screen under its different metonymic forms (see chart below), but it is especially present on the second dimension with the off-frame sounds of electricity. Concerning the link with the supernatural, we can also see all the different unnatural events that happen after their appearance, the same way white noise introduced the convenience store in *Fire Walk with Me* (see chart). With such a number of occurrences (*Figure 57*), we can easily defend that the causal relationship between the entities and electricity is one of the many different ways the director expresses a concept without words.



Old socket



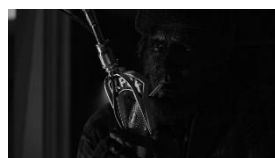
Cigarette lighter



Recent socket



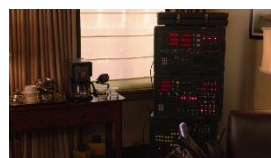
Electric cable



Electric microphone



Flashes



Electronical device



Picture distortion

Figure 57: metonymic representations of "electricity" in Twin Peaks: The Return [Lynch 2017]

Finally, let us consider the sixth dimension and the previous works of David Lynch, but for this we must consider the turn of events *Twin Peaks* was for the director's career and how it marked the difference in his films before and after it. While Mark Frost and David Lynch made the first season with some creative freedom, the producing channel asked them to give at some

point of season two the identity of Laura's murderer, which changed what Lynch and Frost planned: never revealing it. Due to this pressure from the production and parallel projects (e.g. *Wild at Heart*) the two showrunners were not that present in the second season's production.

Before *Twin Peaks*, David Lynch's films were financed by Hollywood producing companies and had quite a good reception from the public. *The Elephant Man* [1980] made a good profit (*Internet Movie Database*), *Blue Velvet* was praised by the critics [1986] and *Wild at Heart* [1990] received the Palme d'Or in Cannes film festival. Yet, two years later, *Fire Walk with Me* was released in Cannes, and got almost unanimous negative reviews, was booed and hissed, and Hollywood producers started to forget Lynch.

From this moment, most of David Lynch's films have been financed by European production societies including the two latest *Mulholland Drive* and *Inland Empire*. The common point of those two films is their setting in Hollywood, and the uncovering of the illusion the world of show-business is, in a certain way Lynch's last response to Hollywood before retiring from feature-film directing.

In 2014, Lynch and Frost announced that there will be a new season of *Twin Peaks*. *The Return* like their own return, but this time, all the episodes would be directed by Lynch as if it was an 18-hour-long film. What can catch our interest in this new season is the different references of the filmmaker's previous works in *Twin Peaks*, as if *The Return* was the synthesis of Lynch's works, and the audio-visual references as their footnotes. Those references can be made by the diegetic elements (e.g. "woodsmen" in *Twin Peaks* and the "witch" in *Mulholland Drive*) elements of the settings (the floor of the black lodge and the floor in *Eraserhead*), the *mise-en-scène* (deep black and white in *The Elephant Man*) and even what Metz called the "apparatus" such as recurring actors of his previous works reunited, such as Kyle MacLachlan and Laura Dern who met in *Blue Velvet* and are reunited in *The Return*.

If we put in parallel some of the shots of this new season with Lynch's previous film and gather them in another chart (see appendix), we can definitely argue that some of the many unanswered questions of the *Twin Peaks* universe are also extended in the extra-diegetic universe, with Lynch as the common denominator. Eventually this makes sense if we consider the show's genesis. On the one hand, Mark Frost was in charge of the *fabula*, so of words; and he extended the universe with books (*The Secret History of Twin Peaks*; *The Final Dossier*). On the other hand, Lynch was in charge of the *syuzhet*, so of the filmic language, and extended the universe with his films.

4 CONCLUSION

The impetus of this study came from the controversies that emerged in the beginning of the 20th century about cinema. The first controversies were about the medium itself, whether it was or was not an art, which ended up with the status of the seventh art. Then the status of film as a language was developed notably with the modern linguistic approach of semioticians like Christian Metz, who considered it as a language without a language system (*langue*), and had the particularity of being a composite language, made of different media such as sound, music and picture. According to this approach, the filmic message had to be taken out of any context, and its meaning was made by its main structure: montage, especially with the *Grande Syntagmatique*.

In contradiction to this approach, the cognitive turn of the early 80s with David Bordwell started considering the filmic message as unfinished and which had to be completed by another entity of the communicative pattern, the spectator. This approach rejected the extreme formalist view on film to something more global by adding to their view on film the principles of *fabula* and *syuzhet* developed by the Russian formalists in literature.

Later on, other linguistic theories on film emerged, both inspired by the modern or cognitive theorists. The enunciative approach added to modern theory the possibility of the spectator to be addressed in the film and the multimodal approach added to the cognitive turn the notion of real-life experience in the spectator's perception of film.

All of these different linguistic approaches on film made me consider that each theory has arguments that should be taken into account. In this consideration, I wondered how it would be possible to give a global structure of film that would take into account the different media that constitute the composite filmic language. This is how came the idea of a hexadimensional pattern of film which would start with the minimal unit of film that the shot

is, and end with the filmic message in context with the production-reception relationship. To this pattern, I added a few factors that are not dependent on any dimension but are essential in the comprehension and interpretation of the film, such as the relevance principle, the *diegesis*, and deixis.

For my analysis I took the different opuses of *Twin Peaks* in order to emphasize the fact that whether the diegetic universe is the same (*fabula*), the way of expressing it onscreen (*syuzhet*) might be different whether it is the original series, its sequel twenty-five years later, or in another format (in this case a feature film). I extended this principle of sameness by using only episodes and audio-visual content directed by the same director (David Lynch) in order to prove that, especially in the *auteur* system, the entity of the director must be taken into account if we want to have a better understanding of the film.

The major difficulties I had in this thesis was firstly to find a certain balance between filmic theories and linguistic theories to have a certain credibility in my speculation that there is an underlying meaning in a film, out of any ideological premises (with the exception of a manifest claim by the director).

I suppose that if I had had more time and pages for this thesis I would have expanded my analysis of filmic language to other works made by foreign directors. This consideration would have been made to see how the perception of the world, art, and language can change whether the director is French, Russian or Japanese for instance.

I would have also considered perhaps how two different directors from the same period and the same socio-political context can create a different meaning with a same process of filming. For instance, the use of a sequence-shot in a film directed by Martin Scorsese might not have the same meaning in a film directed by Brian de Palma, even if they both belong to the movement called the "New Hollywood" of the 70s.

In order to sum up the matter of how we can consider the language of cinema, and how it is constituted, we can compare it to one of the most present symbol of the series *Twin Peaks*: the owl's cave symbol.



Figure 58: The owl's cave symbol

As we did with the multidimensional pattern, this symbol can represent many things that go from a very diegetic reference to wider concepts. Indeed, this symbol reminds us of the actual twin peaks (White Tail and Blue Pine) which reunite in a valley that is the town of Twin Peaks. When we know more about the supernatural genre of the series we can consider it as the Red Room that connects the real world and the world of the entities. It also reminds of the “two worlds” in the poem pronounced by the one-armed man (MIKE).

In other terms this minimalist symbol means that the connection of two different concepts or entities can create a third one. This can be first regarded as the different connotations there can be in a shot where the *diegesis* tells something, while the *mise-en-scène* shows something else. This can be related to Eisenstein's theory of montage $1 + 1 = 3$, or the notion of time that Machin developed as past is on the left and future on the right, which is entirely disrupted in the middle with *Twin Peaks*.

If we go further on the conceptual interpretation of this symbol, we can argue that the approach on the meaning of a film relies in the synthesis of at least two different entities. Therefore, the filmic message is made by its bilateral connection with sound and vision, with

the production and its reception, with the reflexive (semiotics) and cognitive approaches and between the diegetic universe and the real world.

Eventually, we can consider that while cinema is one of the most popular arts, it is nevertheless one of the most complicated in its full comprehension. Its complex meaning is due to the fact that it constantly requires at least a double reading in synchrony: one on what is shown, another one on how it is shown. In a certain way, this concept of the underlying meaning made by two opposite notions was indirectly told by Frost and Lynch in the original series:

*Through the darkness of future past
The Magician longs to see
One chants out between two worlds
Fire... walk with me*

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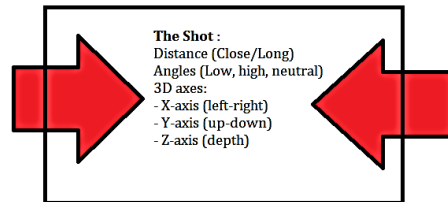
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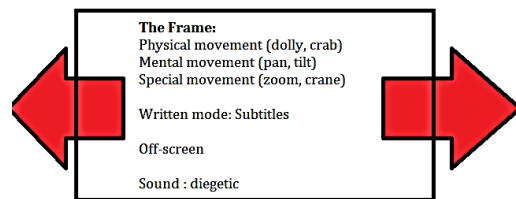
7 APPENDIX

The 6-dimension pattern (hexadimensional pattern)

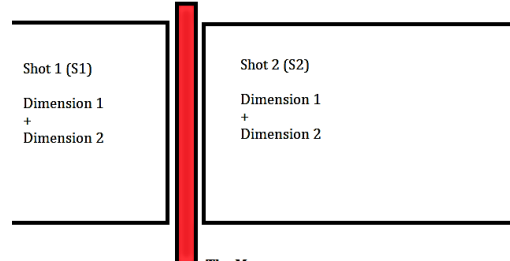
Dimension 1



Dimension 2



Dimension 3



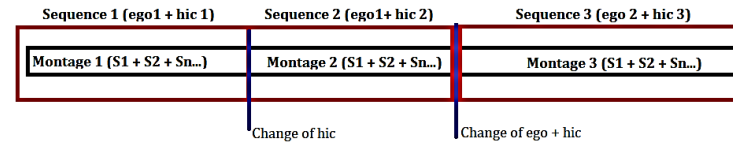
The Montage:

Additive ($S1 + S2$)
 Alternate ($(S1 + S2) + S3$)

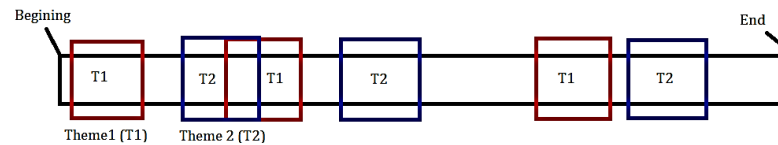
Parallel :
 Kulechov ($S1 + S2 = \text{emotion}$)
 Eisenstein ($S1 + S2 = \text{concept}$)

Superimposition ($S1 = S1A + S1B$)

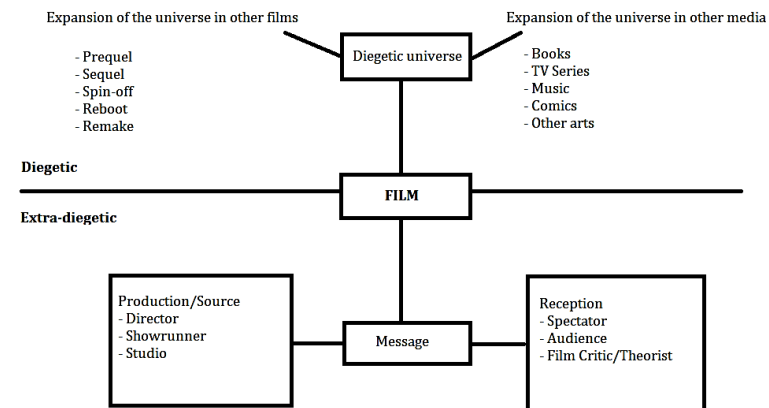
Dimension 4



Dimension 5



Dimension 6



The Sequence :

Structured by deixis
 ego (character)
 hic (place)
 nunc (time)

Change of sequence = change of deixis
 Exception : musical sequence

Film in co-text:

Different recurring themes in the film (T1, T2, Tn...)

Belong to one genre (Western, Drama, Thriller...)

Belong to the *Auteur* system : constitute the recurring style of the director (Hitchcock, Lynch, Tarantino...)

Film in context:

Take into account the context that surrounds the film

Diegetic : the expansion of the diegetic universe in other works

Extra-diegetic : All that is relation to the enunciative relationship between the source and the target.

e.g. The director's previous works, the studio's agenda...

References in *Twin Peaks: The Return* to other works directed by David Lynch

			
<i>Twin Peaks : The Return</i> [Lynch 2017]			
			
<i>Blue Velvet</i> [Lynch 1987]			
			
<i>Wild at Heart</i> [Lynch 1990]			
			
<i>Lost Highway</i> [Lynch 1995]			
			
<i>Mulholland Drive</i> [Lynch 2001]			

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ABSTRACT

For many years, meaning in language has raised many controversies in linguistics. Some defended that there is a double articulation between a signifier and a signified. Some defended that language is a code that enables the speaker to transmit his mental picture to the interlocutor, etc.

The common point between these theories is that in a communicative pattern, language is a medium that encodes the ideas of the speaker and is decoded by the listener, and vice versa.

Yet, the emergence of a new medium in the 20th century, cinema, brought a new issue in the communicative pattern. It was now possible to transmit a mental picture, with a moving picture.

This leads us to the main question: if cinema is a communicative medium, what is the meaning?

Cinema is a medium that can translate ideas. David Lynch

Keywords: meaning, language, cinema, *mise-en-scène*, cognitive, *diegesis*, deixis, structure.



Depuis des années, la question du sens dans le langage a levé maintes polémiques en linguistique. Certains disent qu'il existe une double articulation entre le signifiant et le signifié. D'autres défendent que le langage est un code qui permet au locuteur de transmettre une image mentale à l'interlocuteur, etc.

Le point commun entre ces théories est que, dans un schéma de communication, le langage est un médium qui encode les idées du locuteur, et est décodé par l'interlocuteur, et vice-versa.

Cependant, l'émergence d'un nouveau médium au XX^e siècle, le cinéma, changea la donne dans le schéma de communication. Il était à présent possible de transmettre une image mentale, par une image mouvante.

Ce qui nous amène à l'interrogation principale : si le cinéma est un schéma de communication, quelle est son sens ?

Le cinéma est un médium capable de transcrire les idées. David Lynch

Mots clés : sens, langage, cinéma, mise-en-scène, cognitif, diégèse, deixis, structure.