Pop music in David Lynch: period songs in director's feature films

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Abstract
Pop and adjoining genres songs from the 1950s and 1960s are a feature that American filmmaker David Lynch began to use in his films from "*Blue velvet*" (1986) on and reached, in a scarse way, the 2017 season of the television series "*Twin Peaks*". The aim of this paper is to evaluate whether and how much such practice reiterated in these feature films the contrast with the images achieved in Alan Splet's sound design in Lynch's filmography through sound effects, also considering connections of this use with theories of the contemporary and pop culture. For that, the films "*Blue velvet*", "*Wild at heart*" (1990), "*Lost highway*" (1997), "*Mulholland Dr.*" (2001) and "*Inland empire*" (2006) are analyzed. In conclusion, synchronic and diachronic effects operate in simultaneity, redefining and presentifying the past of those pop songs.
Keywords: David Lynch. Pop. Soundtrack. Music. Sound contrast.

Introduction

The 2017 season of the television series *"Twin Peaks"*, called *Twin Peaks - the return*, is a long way from the first two of the programs (1990-1991) on the music track. In the original seasons, Angelo Badalamenti's instrumental music was the only one heard regularly, always extra-diegetic. The ballad *Just you*, composed by Badalamenti and written by Lynch in the 1950s style, sung by James Hurley (James Marshall), with Maddy Ferguson (Sheryl Lee) and Donna Hayward (Lara Flynn Boyle) in the backing vocals, drew attention in episode 9 of the second season. Hurley sang the same song in episode 13 of the 2017 season, at Bang Bang Bar, also known as Roadhouse, the stage for other pop music performances at the end of almost every episode in the recent season. This solution partly takes up a recurring musical aspect in the director's filmography between *"Blue velvet"* (1986) and *"Inland empire"* (2006): the peculiar way of using American pop songs of the 1950s and 1960s.

Other episodes of 2017 featured mostly songs of dark melodies. Little space was left for famous FM instrumental pop songs and songs from decades past in the original versions,

such as *Sleep walk*, by Santo and Johnny, and *Green onions*, by Booker T. & The MG's (both in ep. 7), *I've been loving you too long* (Live from Monterey Pop), by Otis Redding (both in ep. 15), and even the re-recorded *Viva Las Vegas*, by Shawn Colvin (ep. 11). The romantic *I love how you love me*, by The Paris Sisters (ep. 5) surrounds a scene of extortion. *My prayer*, by The Platters (ep. 8 and 18), is performed over the radio in idyllic night scenes located in 1956 (ep. 8) until people start to be cruelly murdered. The romanticism of the music contrasts with the horror of the images, albeit in a verisimilar composition of the scene.

This solution is what Wendy Everett considers to be a feat that reduces the subversion in the use of period songs, for the sake of narrative (EVERETT, 2000), despite the possible personal memories that may distract the viewer from his attention on it. This is not always Lynch's option. These songs act in an empathic way (CHION, 2008) in relation to the images. That is, they situate the atmosphere of the scene, or illustrate sonorously and highlight what the images already inform. Thus, they contribute to an enhanced emotional experience with cinematography, interpretation of actors and other sounds, in addition, of course, to the effects provided by the editing.

It is a usual solution from classic Hollywood cinema. A track of pre-existing songs is often used for credible purposes of authenticating historical time and geographical and social context in period films (HUBBERT, 2014). In cinema, Lynch had already explored the possibilities of this type of song much more, in strangeness and contrast effects equivalent to those provided by sound designer Alan Splet's sound effects in his first films. It is this type of audiovisual relationship that is recalled here, from the perspective of these old songs.

It was "*Blue velvet*" that marked in Lynch's filmography the beginning of two sound procedures linked to the musical score that became recurrent in his later feature films. One of them was the partnership in the orchestral score with composer Angelo Badalamenti, one of the most prolific of the last 30 years. In the same film, Lynch began to include pop songs and adjacent genres from the 1950s and 1960s in original recordings, contemporary re-recordings of the films or filmed interpretations of the actors on the scene. The effects of each musical insertion of this type vary and, even so, corroborate in a sense of reiterating central thematic and aesthetic elements of Lynch's work. Claudia Gorbman defends the concept of "author music", for the recurrent manner in which filmmakers use music as an idiosyncratic expression of taste, not only to serve the plot, but also to the artist's authorial signature (GORBMAN, 2017).

Also, in "*Blue velvet*" Lynch worked for the last time with Splet, a partner for 16 years in what was characterized as the sound identity of the director's first films, based mainly on the enhancement of ambient sounds and the distortion or exchange of the human voice by others types of sound. Although he was awarded the Oscar for sound effects for Carroll Ballard's *"The black stallion"* (USA, 1980), Splet's work achieved its greatest degree of aesthetic daring in his partnership with Lynch. "*Blue velvet*" is, therefore, the director's only film that combines these three resources in the sound creation so characteristic of his work.

The most atypical effect of Splet's sound design for Lynch is the contrast that the sound causes to the images, in order to create apparent breaks in the flow of the narrative and, consequently, an atmosphere of recurring strangeness for the viewer. Having worked between the 1970s and 1990s and maintained a 16-year partnership with Lynch, Splet coincides temporarily with the historical period of culture identified by different theorists as postmodernity. Since there is no consensus on deferring that period from contemporary culture, it is possible to affirm that aspects of his sound design are still valid today, even though his solutions and style are quite peculiar.

To seek to recognize whether, how and how much the pop songs in Lynch's films contributed to maintaining this atmosphere of strangeness so characteristic of his cinema and how Splet's sound contribution gave way in large part to the musical score with pop insertions in the later films of the filmmaker is the challenge that this article brings to your proposal. To this end, five Lynch feature films were chosen in which this type of song is present. In addition to "*Blue velvet*" itself, "*Wild at heart*" (USA, 1990), "*Lost highway*" (France/USA, 1997), "*Mulholland Dr.*" (France/USA, 2001) and "*Inland Empire*" (France/Poland/USA, 2006).

However, before going through the analysis of these films, it is necessary to state what characterized Splet's work to Lynch and how it happened. Sound designer is a function that emerged in film production in the 1970s, created to establish a sound identity to the entire film from the conception of the project, also applying types of construction to the sound - through editing, effects and mixing - corresponding to the visual aesthetics envisaged by the director (MANZANO, 2013).

Alan Splet (1939-1994) is mainly remembered for his work alongside Lynch. Under his direction, Splet participated, in his film debut, in the director's fourth short film, "*The Grandmother*" (USA, 1970), and then the feature films "*Eraserhead*" (USA, 1977), "*The elephant man*" (USA/United Kingdom, 1980), "*Dune*" (USA, 1984) and "*Blue velvet*", the last three already made with a studio structure. In Splet's complete filmography, there are 25 credits as sound designer or sound editor.

Through the partnership between Splet and Lynch, atypical sound constructions, comparable to the 1928 proposal of Russian filmmakers and theorists Sergei Eisenstein, V.I. Pudovkin and G.V. Aleksandrov, in the manifest *A statement about the future of sound cinema*, were seen and heard in American feature-length films produced in a studio structure. The precepts for sound usage in cinema of the three echoed the Russian montage theory, one of the first in declared opposition to the aesthetic practices of classical cinema. The manifest was intended to encourage a creative use of sound, free from the obligation to synchronize image and audio. Although not exactly pointed out this way in the manifest, the effects of this asynchrony separate the audiovisual relationship from the reiteration of the image through sound.

However, it is worth considering, as well as Alvim (2017), that, even though it is almost always treated in a sense of contrast, conflict, the widespread term "counterpoint" of

the manifest may be inaccurate, mistaken or lack greater contextualization. Even Eisenstein and Pudovkin explained their proposals for using cinema sound in later texts, in which they considered other aspects of the complex relationships between images and sounds, such as the multiplicity of simultaneous elements and the specific and general meanings of the composition which they are part of.

Supported by Chion and Gorbman, among other theorists, Alvim (2017) mentions the expectations generated by cinematographic conventions and the expression "audiovisual dissonance", considered by Chion as an inverted lag of the classic conventions that, in the end, pay homage to them in binary form. In any case, the purpose of this analysis is precisely to recognize and highlight contrasts that show disparity between what is seen and what is heard in Lynch's features. Even if they do not end the possible readings of the different nuances of their audiovisual relations, the opposition between these combinations, specifically when in pairs - simultaneous harmony and dissonance - is a central feature of the filmmaker's filmography, as we will see below.

The songs in the cinema

When a producer makes a film set in the 1950s, for example, it is customary to include popular music from that time. Such recordings bring with them an emotional charge full of nostalgia that adds a wonderful dimension to the impact of the film (CRABB, 2005), the memories mentioned by Everett (2000). This emotional character of songs that mark time on the charts also serves contemporary plots. Máximo (2003) lists two more types of procedure: pop songs composed for non-musical films and extra-diegetic music built from raw pop material, such as guitars, electronic keyboards and computers, of which "*Dune*" is replete.

Nevertheless, at some level, throughout his filmography, Lynch made use of the three procedures to some extent, like in the original songs of "*Eraserhead*" and "*Inland Empire*" and in the extra-diegetic guitars of "*Dune*". To assess the closest - because it's partial - use of a patchwork scheme of non-original songs, the five films analyzed serve well. However, it is important to consider structural and recurring characteristics of Lynch's work.

Lynch's cinema transits on the border between situations and opposing elements such as illusion and reality, the reasonable and the imagined, the natural and the artificial, the internal and the external, what is dreamed and what is witnessed (FERRARAZ, 2003). There is no definition on which side predominates. The conflicts resulting from these contrasts, sometimes analogies, guide his narratives. Such ruptures extend to the imagery and sound aspects, treated in such a way as to immerse the viewer in a dreamlike atmosphere. This brings Lynch's work closer to surrealism. In this context, the filmmaker even breaks with temporal and spatial continuity, in an ambiguous exchange between what are diegetic sounds and those that are extra-diegetic, with complex and sophisticated sound effects in

their composition, often amplified or distorted. These are some of the features that Splet used in sound effects to translate the director's proposal into sounds.

Narrative fragments, whether visual or sound, isolated or simultaneous, serve to reveal sinister, sick and violent aspects of characters and experiences lived by them. The identities of these characters are often shown duplicate and generate strangeness, such as German literary romanticism, expressionist cinema and classic American horror. In that sense, *"Twin Peaks"* and *"Mulholland Dr."* are exemplary, with more than one actor playing more than one character - or, perhaps, personality. Lynch confronts reality and copy, material and imagination, body and spirit (FERRARAZ, 2003). From the strangeness perceived by the viewers, the possibility of their co-authorship arises, in an attempt to generate possible meanings from impressions.

Lynch prioritizes emotion, but not for the typical Hollywood catharsis. In a rational and intuitive way, it explores intense emotional states in depth, without slipping into the explanatory comfort of intellectual and logical processes (FERRARAZ, 2003). The classic narrative structures of cinema, which he also adopts to generate emotional involvement of the viewer, are just more fragments that he soon subverts, usually through exaggeration or artificiality, even of details, such as contrasts between the image and the sounds that accompany it.

In this conflict between effects of illusionism and anti-illusionism, the sound several times reveals fissures of identity, in dissociation procedures that break the associative flow of what is seen and heard in most of his films. When Splet creates scenes in which the sound does not find any clear sign that it comes from what is shown in the scene, even in the offscreen space, he highlights the artificiality of the audiovisual construction and establishes a sound contrast, which occurs in specific moments of films, thus maintaining this tension and collaborating with an additional layer of strangeness.

Since *"Blue Velvet"*, pop music, notably that of the 1950s and 1960s, often started to act in this sense as well. Lynch made his choices for audiovisual expressiveness. Rodley (1997) also highlights the viewer's perception in the director's films of an absence of rules and conventions that provide comfort and, above him, guidance, bases of experience in the face of classic cinema. It is, for this, a process not only of frequent use of the absurd and incongruous, but of 'defamiliarization' and a state between dream and awakening (RODLEY, 1997).

Sound examples of this are in humans who emit bark-like sounds in the short film "*The Grandmother*" (1970), the gale that occurred in Henry's closed room in "*Eraserhead*", the images of the woman screaming superimposed on those of elephants while heavy thuds are heard background in "*The elephant man*", the bestial vocal distortions without any change of facial expression in the characters of "*Dune*" and the intimate scenes of Jeffrey and Dorothy with flames and explosion in "*Blue velvet*". For Rodley (1997), instead of trying to understand dreams through an intellectual perspective, Lynch transforms them into sensory

experiences through non-linear or logical narrative strategies, for which Splet's sound design becomes a key piece.

Drazin (2000) considers Jeffrey's slap in Dorothy one of the most disturbing in the history of cinema, which he credits to Splet's perfectionism. According to him, the sound designer had already spent 63 days recording sounds for his debut work, "*The Grandmother*". His sound effects leave doubt whether they are from musical instruments. This is when they are perceived. For Drazin (2000), they are not set up to be analyzed or even consciously recognized. They give a tone that defies explanation, like the atmospheres that Lynch has always tried to build.

Considering these constructions and their effects, it's possible to assess how they reflect the historical moment of our culture so that we can, with more grounds, check the use of period pop music in Lynch's more recent feature films. A past revisited with original recordings or re-recordings that give new meaning to the emotional character of these songs. "Songs can therefore increase the multiple textualities of the film and the individual by emphasizing the lack of distinct boundaries between past and present, fiction and reality, screen and audience" (EVERETT, 2000, p. 112).

Santana (2009, p. 11) explains that "the contemporary can also be defined as the production of temporalities lost from natural time. Natural time, when reduced to one of the temporalities of the present, marks the end of the certainty of "a unique reality"". For him, the marks of the contemporary are revealed by pointing fragments of reality that make both synchronic and diachronic representations simultaneous in the same media space.

> If the contemporary outdates the difference between the past and the present, much of this is due to the hybrid presence of the diachronic as a mark of the synchronic. This presence transforms the diachronic of what merely happened into happened-happening, that is, an experience that is both past and present. The virtual appearance of a single time produced by the fragmented temporalities of the media disappears when it emerges in different layers in the social space as realities marked in their transit as novelty (SANTANA, 2009, p. 11).

Maffesoli (2012) sees a cyclical and complex process that inevitably repeats itself through eternal laws of imitation, a contamination mechanism that makes him recall Gilbert Durand and his metaphor of the semantic basin as a starting point for the studies of the imaginary. This metaphor is about several streams on the flanks of the mountains that "will constitute a cultural current, to which we will give a name and of which we will concentrate the guides before they get lost again in the delta and a new cycle starts again" (MAFFESOLI, 2012, p. 113). His vision is in line with that of Gumbrecht (2009), for whom human existence, in a culture of meaning, remains in continuous and progressive attempts to transform the world based on the interpretations of things and the projection of human desires in the

future, an impulse that is absent in cultures of presence, in which human beings seek only to inscribe their behavior in what they consider the structures and rules of a given cosmology.

> But there is yet another, less obvious, precondition for the presentification of the past through the texts that needs to be mentioned. Whenever we "make present" things, bodies or feelings, we activate and accentuate that dimension of experience that, in my basic introductory typology, I call "culture of presence". Culture of presence, as I said, is different from culture of meaning because it does not impose on us the constant obligation and expectation that we must transform the world through our actions (GUMBRECHT, 2009, p. 17).

The author explains that the culture of presence marks a place within a stable cosmology, "implying that the passage of time will not be experienced as producing a distance *vis-à-vis* the past" (GUMBRECHT, 2009, p. 17). Considering that time in cultures of presence does not have the prerogative of being a tool for change, the presentification of a past in its materiality generates less resistance, fear and skepticism than modern historical culture has taught us to produce (GUMBRECHT, 2009).

Another concept complementary to this characteristic of presentification is dissensus, according to Rancière (1996). Although he deals with questions of an ideological order, it can be extended to the understanding of distinct and simultaneous temporalities in the current cultural moment. "The practice of dissensus is thus an invention that makes you see two worlds in one: the world in which commoners speak and the one in which they do not speak, the world in which what they speak is no visible object and the world in that is" (RANCIÈRE, 1996, p. 375). Rancière (1996) defines dissensus as the action that builds two litigious and paradoxical worlds where two parts of the sensitive world are revealed. Common in the readings of Rancière (1996), Gumbrecht (2009), Maffesoli (2002) and Santana (2009) is the idea of simultaneity, the coexistence of elements aligned with a context, like contemporaneity, and others from outside it - in this case, from other times. Past forms, styles or even ideas reappear cyclically in new times, often resignified, such as Lynch's use of old songs in contemporary plots.

Pop on Lynch's soundtrack

"*Blue velvet*" starts with *Blue velvet*, a song by Bobby Vinton (1963). Bucolic scenes of blue sky, red flowers in front of a white fence, a fire brigade truck passing in slow motion with a fireman waving at the camera, more flowers, children crossing the crosswalk, quiet, wooded suburb home. A middle-aged man waters the garden, a middle-aged woman watches TV, where a scene, probably from a film noir, with a detail shot of a pointed gun is displayed. Cut to the garden, where the hose coils on a plant branch and the man pulls, until he has a

heart attack and falls on the grass. The water keeps coming out and a dog climbs on the man to drink it.

The volume of the music is reduced and its reverberation distorted, until it gives way to the sounds of agitated foliage and insects at a maximized volume, as the camera closes up, in detail, showing the lawn and revealing a tangle of insects, in the typical effect subversion reducer cited by Everett (2000). The romantic lyrics and melody, perfect for a suburban idyll, surrounds an almost adorable heart attack with the graceful presence of the puppy, passport to a dark audiovisual plunge through the undeground of the small town of Lumberton through the lawn of one of its backyards. Santana's (2009) 'happened' (in past decades) happening in new contexts, starting with the imitation mentioned by Maffesoli (2012), but ending as musical contamination in an unforeseen tragedy. Later in the film, the same song is sung diegetically by Dorothy Vallens (Isabella Rosselini) in a concert hall, but in an interpretation in which the sad sense of the English word "blue" is evident, due to the slower pace and the character's facial expression, the empathic character, according to Chion (2008). Vinton's version plays again on the arrival in one of Jeffrey's (Kyle Mclachlan) visits to Dorothy.

Roy Orbinson's *In dreams* (1963) marks one of the clearest contrasts in Lynch's filmography, played while Jeffrey and Dorothy are held hostage by the Frank's gang (Dennis Hopper) and Ben (Dean Stockwell) quietly pretends to sing the song mockingly for the whole group. When Frank and his companions take the couple to a distant land where Jeffrey is beaten, the song resumes and Frank teases Jeffrey by whispering part of the song's romantic lyrics. It is curious to note Lynch's casting in this scene. Hopper participated in two cinematographic icons of youth rebellion before pop universe dominated the media, "*Rebel without a cause*" (USA, 1955) and "*Easy rider*" (USA, 1969). Then, already middle aged, through the characters he finds himself in front of the well-behaved youth represented by Jeffrey. The old song ironically becomes more present in Jeffrey's good boy personality, while Frank, old enough to be able to say "from that time" updates it in the dissensus of his violent paradoxical approach.

Ketty Lester's romantic *Love letters* (1962) marks the end of the scene in which Jeffrey witnesses the heartbreaking image of the bodies of Don Vallens and Detective Gordon in Dorothy's apartment. Cut to the police shooting in front of where the criminals are, glass falls in slow motion from a window and the music keeps playing until Jeffrey leaves the scene intact and gets out of the apartment. The melody gives a tone of nostalgic sadness to the scene, although the lyrics are about a couple who love each other at a distance, keeping in touch by mail. The materiality of the song, in this case its rhythm and melody, is presented outside its original context, without resistance and fear - although neither without clarity of meaning - in some degree of irony in relation to the images.

In "*Wild at heart*" there is a scene in which, after a fight in a concert hall, Sailor (Nicolas Cage) sings *Love me* (1956), by Elvis Presley, to Lula (Laura Dern) in a serenade

tone in public. *Be-Bop-A-Lu-La*, by Gene Vincent and His Blue Caps (1956), plays extra-diegeticly in a sequence of sex scenes of the couple. *Love me tend*er (1956), also by Presley, sung by Cage again, ends the film already in the credits, with the couple hugging on the hood of a car, stuck in a traffic jam. In an intensely emotional tone, like throughout the film. In all three cases, the association is empathic. Presley's two songs work on a romantic nostalgic approach, through the melody and lyrics. It is worth noting that, at the time of the songs, Lynch, born in 1946, was going from childhood to pre-adolescence. *Be-Bop-A-Lu-La*, although without a clear reference to sex in the lyrics, has a more syncopated rhythm with a marked guitar presence. It does not clash with what the scene shows and matches Sailor's aesthetic universe. The distance of time becomes irrelevant for the old songs, as indicated by Gumbrecht. As there are no prerogatives of changing the meaning due to the conflict between rhythm and lyrics in relation to images, the assimilation of scenes is easier and more natural.

"*Lost highway*" has a scene in which Pete (Balthazar Getty) rests in the backyard of his parents' house, observes the dog and a children's pool in the neighboring house to the extra-diegetic sound of an instrumental version of *Insensatez*, by Tom Jobim (1963). The melody gives the scene a bucolic, mildly solar atmosphere, with a rhythm that inspires tranquility that is adequate to the character's contemplative pause, empathic to the scene, without contrasts. It only clashes with the disturbing whole, in general nocturnal or interior, of the film. However, that music is also in disagreement with this analysis, since it is not a song. *This magic moment*, originally recorded by The Drifters in 1960, is played extra-diegeticly in an updated version by Lou Reed. It has a more rocky rhythm in the scene in which Alice (Patricia Arquette) appears for the first time in the film, leaving in slow motion the convertible Cadillac (of the same year) by Mr. Eddy (Robert Loggia), giving the scene an aspect of extended time, to Pete's awe.

It is an empathic musical relationship with no subversion to be reduced, just Reed's harsher revised style and Reed's almost-spoken voice compared to Ben E. King's strong voice and the grandiloquent violins of the original version of the song. Re-recording of the 1956 original by Screamin 'Jay Hawkins, *I put a spell on you*, played by Marilyn Manson, in its growing furor until its throaty screams, suits the scene in which Alice is forced to undress at gunpoint, but it accentuates the intensity and tension of the scene much more than the images themselves. From the streams on the cultural flanks that Maffesoli (2012) mentions, Lynch took advantage of lyrics that speaks of spell and ownership (or possession) in a partial dissensus between intense vocals and images of few slow movements.

In "*Mulhollad Dr.*", *Sixteen reasons* (1960), by Connie Stevens, is played in a scene where a vocal group led by Carol (Elizabeth Lackey) simulates a studio recording of the song, in period costumes, causing a break in the narrative, until it is revealed that it is a casting call hearing. The character Camilla Rhodes (Melissa George), also dressed in 1960s fashion, imitates the singer Linda Scott in *I've told every little star* (1961) with such

accuracy that she seems to be singing for herself. The homage to the period is evident. However, it is with *Llorando*, a Spanish version of *Crying* by Roy Orbinson (1961), that Rebekah Del Rio (herself) provides the most striking scene with pop music of the time. After being announced by a presenter who anticipates "*no hay band*" (there is no band), she sings intensely, reverberating throughout the theater, called Club Silencio, watched by Betty/Diane (Naomi Watts) and Rita/Camilla (Laura Elena Harring). In the middle of her performance, she passes out and her voice continues to be heard, as the song goes on normally, explaining the playback.

Here there is a case of clearly concealed dissensus that makes us think of the artificiality of the construction of time and space in cinema, one of the thematic axes of the film. Perfect lip synchronicities repeatedly highlighted as a farce. It is the dubbing of the song, clearly revealed as a filmic device in scenes and in a artwork in which everything is built to deter almost any notion of narrative clarity. One can even understand the scene itself, but its function in the whole of the film is only one piece in the narrative kaleidoscope that Lynch designed. The presentification of form occurs through the emptying of the romanticism of lyrics and melodies to create a mystery between illusionism and anti-illusionism.

Finally, "*Inland empire*" features an actress who begins to adopt the personality of her character, then her life takes on an aspect of a surreal nightmare. That tone of the film is clear from the beginning. *The loco-motion*, by Little Eva (1962), appears in a sequence in which a group of girls talks about intimacies, while Nikki Grace/Susan Blue (Laura Dern) watches. One of the girls hums the lyrics of the song, another shows her breasts, and all of a sudden, they are all lined up to dance to Eva's song, while the lighting regularly flashes. They sing part of the lyrics and suddenly disappear.

At the end of a conversation between Nikki/Susan and her boyfriend, in which she says she is pregnant, *At last*, sung by Etta James (1961), begins to play extra-diegeticly. Cut to a dark room where the girls in the sequence of *The loco-motion* dance, seen only by their silhouettes, shrouded in smoke or a projected film, which leaves the lighting uneven. The original song is not played until the end, lasting less than a minute.

Sinner man, by Nina Simone (1965), begins to play the final credits with an exchange of kisses blown in the distance between Dern's character and an attractive and sensual brunette girl, who then lends a hand to a boy sitting on her side. A monkey jumps, a log is sawn. As the song goes on, a group of women dance in a hall of Nikki/Susan's mansion with strobe light, one of them pretending to dub the singer's voice. There are brief cuts to Dern's character and to a man who cuts the log. In all three cases, the songs act as musical insertions for dissolving the tension of the plot without an illustrative or elucidative function of what the previous scenes reveal, neither by the lyrics nor the melody. What happened is happening through a mechanism of cultural contamination without a contextual relation, neither the songs nor the plot of the film itself.

Conclusion

Sound designer Alan Splet stands out in the history of cinematographic sound for elaborating in his partnership with filmmaker David Lynch a combination of sound effects that does not make clear the source of these, nor the sound information presented, based on sound mixes without an obligation of clear connection with the images, as in the unusual ambient sounds of some scene locations, the exchange ("*The grandmother*", "*The elephant man*" and "*Blue velvet*") or distortion ("*Dune*") of characters' voices, amplification sound effects to the point of creating disturbing sounds ("*Blue velvet*"), among other effects tailored to create additional layers of the strangeness so dear to Lynch.

From *"Blue velvet"* on, Lynch also started to use several pop songs from the 1950s and 1960s, often with a similar strangeness effect. In this film, there are moments of bucolic or melancholic empathy (*Blue velvet*) and others of opposition, even with sarcasm in the contrast between the musical score and the situation on the scene (*In dreams* and *Love letters*). Lynch uses these songs to blur the idyllic imagery associated with the time they were released, reiterating his strategies of bewilderment and strangeness. However, this did not become standard in his films, after all, the perceived formula would imply a certain comfort in predictability that would reduce strangeness. Without Splet, even Lynch's sound effects would lean towards other types of contrast, such as the musical track of "*Twin Peaks*" (2017) evidences, full of pop songs, including old ones.

"*Wild at heart*" makes use of contextual parity between music and scene, in addition to two of the three songs analyzed being, performed diegeticly by the protagonist, in an approach that is often used in cinema. The same can be said of "*Lost highway*", in a musical atmosphere consistent with the scenes, almost without contradictory effect. "*Mulholland Dr.*" presents the most artificial form of musical synchrony, perfectly perceived as realistic without actually being, as explained in the *Llorando* scene. And "*Inland empire*" has a dreamlike effect in all the cases analyzed, although it is quite cohesive with the whole of the film, therefore it doesn't cause strangeness on its own.

Such multiplicity of presentification strategies from the past, according to Gumbrecht (2009), reflects how contemporaneity simultaneously assimilates both synchrony and diachrony, according to Santana (2009), a phenomenon that holds important points of similarity with Rancière's (2008) concept of dissensus. "*Blue velvet*" serves as a watershed between the legacy of Splet in Lynch's filmography and the following sound trend in his films, supported by Badalamenti compositions and a pop music track with recurring period elements, a unique level of sound variety to Lynch so far. Old songs, whose nostalgia, whether that of the director or that of the viewer, is a passport to a wealth of combinations that include aspects of reality, dream, the logical, the sensitive, the narrative, the sensory, synchrony, diachrony, diegesis and extra-diegesis, past and present, in the style of Lynch.

While other filmmakers even use erudite culture to create a postmodern pop pastiche, he uses pop to create films of remarkable artistic erudition.

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